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THE
CASTLE
OF
STRATHMAY,

OR,

Scenes in the North :

ILLUSTRATIVE OF
SCOTTISH MANNERS AND SOCIETY,
A TALE,
IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A WINTER IN EDINBURGH," &c.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home—rever'd abroad—*BURNS*

VOL. II.

The Second Edition.

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CHAPTER XV.

A Death, and Legacy,—Reflections of the Heir—A Poem.

DOUGLAS shortly was withdrawn from even thought of his Lillian by a calamity, felt by him in grief unfeigned; Melville, the man of virtue, the patron of merit, the support of the distressed was called to receive his reward in heaven, no struggle marked his departure; the servant who closed his curtains believed he slept, so serene, so placid, was his venerable countenance. Douglas melted even with the sorrow of childhood as he bent over the stiffened form; beheld the eye that so lately had beamed cheerfully on him closed for

ever, and heard the voice of friendship no more.

Angus and Euphrasia arrived the day following Mr. Melville's death, at Hastings' House, accompanied by the Duchess. The generous youth left his bride, and hastened to Douglas, whom he found in Edinburgh. Mr. Melville's man of business had arranged every matter relative to the funeral, and the last rites were witnessed by the most respectable characters in Edinburgh.

Better were it for the world, (said the venerable St. Bernard, taking the arm of Douglas and leading him from the grave,) better were it, if many men survived, amiable, just, and good as him we leave.

Mr Melville's will bequeathed his whole property, with the exception of some annuities to distant connections, to Mr. Douglas, who, retiring to Glenesk, spent some weeks in privacy and meditation.

He was now as it were left alone in life. From this idea, he recurred to the letter, whose address and contents would determine whether any human being had affinity with him. Angus first broke in upon his reveries, by remarking, he was now Morna's sole protector. Douglas started as he spoke, a past feeling seemed to return. She shall not feel her loss, were his words; I will protect, support, and comfort her. Angus, who as yet knew not the brighter flame that burned in the breast of his friend, towards Lady Lillian, half smiled. My Euphrasia will, I am convinced, be happy to receive her under our roof, (said Angus).

The pleasurable emotion with which Alfred would have received this considerate overture, was obliterated by a remembrance of the Duchess. Morna had been the subject of her ridicule; her simple story awakened irony, and haughtily had

she affected to despise her. Douglas resolved not to expose the gentle girl to such invidious remark, determined to see Morna himself; and, in the interval, wrote a few lines to her at Roslin, informing her he had settled on her an annuity, and bidding her name any request to give him the pleasure of granting it.

Morna, on the morning when this billet arrived, had taken a volume of the North British Magazine from her simple library, and opening at the following lines, read them with exquisite pleasure to Mrs. Macpherson; who, it being the Sabbath, was a “wie scandaleezed till she ken’d the subject.”

We make no apology for transcribing at length the lines so full of simple beauty and natural description. Burns will come to the reader’s recollection; but whilst we admit the following a *copy*, the poet that followed so exquisite a painter of nature,

must be admitted to rank next to him as a delineator of artless devotion and primitive simplicity.

HAIL holy day ! by thy Creator blest ;
 How sweet thou to the weary lab'rer art,
 Who from his weekly drudgery at rest
 In some low mud-wall'd cottage, far apart,
 Welcomes the dawning wi' a grateful heart !
 The day that calls him to the house o' prayer
 Where for the time forgotten a' his smart
 In the assembly o' the saints ; for there
 He finds a healin' balm for every wound o' care.

Scotia ! such were thy Sabbath-days, when ance,
 Down the sweet bosom of the hawthorn vale,
 The village bell did, at the day's advance,
 Salute the echoes wi' a mornin' peal,
 Slow, solemn, borne upon the fragrant gale,
 (All stillness else, serenity and peace,)
 Callin' the lowly rustic o' the dale
 To shake off slumber, rouse from sleep's embrace,
 An' join the gen'ral hymn of his Creator's praise.

The Gudeman waukens wi' the mornin' ray :
 Soon as the family are rous'd frae sleep
 They're a' assembled, to begin the day
 Wi' praise to Him whase watchfu' hand did keep
 Their silent helpless hours, when slumber deep
 (Sair wrought and toil'd, and laid upo' their beds)
 Did o'er their wearied limbs refreshin' creep :
 He then wi' rev'rence next a chapter reads ;
 Syne prays the Lord would shield,—an' ay supply
 their needs,

The worship ended, frae their knees they rise,
 An' out they gae a' wee to tak' the air,
 To see the wather, an' what like the sky's ;
 Mean-while the wife the parritch does prepare :
 Weel pleas'd are they wi' siccan humble fare.
 The blessin' asked, soon wi' stammocks keen,
 (The wants o' nature are no ill to ser'e),
 An' soon I trow, they scart their coggies clean,
 An' as weel pleas'd as they fine luxuries had been.

Next to the house o' God their steps they bend,
 The wee things toddlin' hand in hand before ;
 The big anes next,—the twa auld folks behind,
 Stay to see a' things right, an' lock the door.

Baith in the claes they at their waddin' wore :
 An' a' tbe bairns wi' sleekit hair an' clean
 Are trig an' neat ; for it would grieve them sair,
 If at the kirk they otherways were seen
 Than hale and snod' as a' their forbears ay had been.

Before the door the Gudeman joins the band
 I' their best claes, where " neebours, neebours meet,"
 Crackin' o'er countra news, thegither stand
 'Till the last bell is ringin' the retreat ;
 Then in they gae, an' ilk ane taks his seat.
 " To praise the Lord together, let us join,"
 The pastor says, and reads the psalm that's meet ;
 The loud precentor gies't out line by line,
 While they wi' a' their might join in the strains divine.

The deep-ton'd organ, an' the weel train'd choir,
 May quiver hymns in soft melodious lays ;
 In weel tim'd measures warble soft for hire,—
 Thro' vaulted roofs the swellin' Anthem raise :
 The humble saints in humble hamely phrase,
 More grateful these to the Almighty ear,
 In uncouth accents sing aloud His praise ;
 Tho' rude their melody, in heart sincere
 They join to bless His name wi' reverential fear.

Pray'r said, the priest wi' unaffected grace
 Opens the sacred treasure o' the word,
 T' unfold its doctrines, in its pages trace
 Th' instructions that its holy truths afford :
 Not wi' a studied tone or stare absurd,
 Affected start or impotent grimace,
 That might perhaps suit the theatric board,
 But is unseemly in a sacred place,
 To meet I ween for him, the messenger o' grace.

An' then its fittest passages he'd choose,
 Or to console, encourage, or restrain,
 Virtue to strengthen, wickedness expose,
 Duty to teach, or doctrine to explain ;
 And charity,—that pleasing heav'nly chain !
 Wide as the world to all the human kind,—
 Whose gentle friendly offices constrain ;
 An' man to man in soft affection bind,
 With holy fervour ay he'd bid them keep in mind.

Nor let them envy tho' the wicked oft
 In pow'r and glory should exalted be,
 Clothed in purple, delicate and soft,
 His branches spreading “ like the green bay tree,”

His proud heart saying, " I'll no sorrow see ;"
 When desolation comes with sweeping blast,
 As summer chaff his blushing honours flee, -
 His glory faded, humbled in the dust,
 He leaves his wonted scite a cheerless howling waste.

Between the sermons, when they hame repair,
 If chance the Gudeman ony neebour sees
 Wha distant comes, and wha he thinks shou'd share
 Their Sabbath's dinner—(may be bread and cheese)
 Kindly he ca's on him to come, an' says,
 'That he had better gang awa' wi' them,
 The Gudewife presses him, an' blythe he gaes,
 " For its a lang gate he has to gae hame,
 Altho' to trouble them he maist thinks shame."

Again the pastor takes the book o' truth,
 Tells how " religion ilk state can adorn ;
 The staff o' hoary age, the stay o' youth,
 A brighter crown than that by monarchs worn ;
 Its yoke is light, an' easy to be borne,
 An' O its burden gentle is an' mild :
 Its ways however infidels may scorn,
 Its ways are justly ways of pleasure styl'd,
 And never yet were they who walk'd in them beguil'd.

“ Tho’ wand’ring in the paths of sorrow here
 This truth ye oft are tempted to deny,
 Tho’ troubles oft may wring the bitter tear,
 Misfortune oft awake the heavy sigh ;—
 Tho’ crowding griefs on ev’ry hand should lye,
 Think not your trials shall for ever last ;
 Lift up your heads, redemption draweth nigh !
 Resigned wait till the black storm be past,
 Tho’ darkest clouds surround, the ways of heaven are
 just !”

Then would he choose a nobler higher theme,
 And on the wings of extacy would soar,
 An’ speak of joys when life’s perturbed dream
 An’ all its puny passion should be o’er ;
 When virtue landed on that tranquil shore,
 That shore of joy, eternal love and peace !
 Where warring nations shall disturb no more,
 And where the wicked from their troubling cease,
 And joys unknown on earth eternally increase.

To see them right’s the comfort of his life,
 The sermon ended, he does kindly speer
 For this ane and for that, an’ how’s the wife,
 If a’ be weel at hame, she was na here ?

For his parishioners to him are dear ;
 Nor thinks his duty with the sermon done,
 An that ance finish'd, he need fash nae mair,
 But is acquainted wi' his folk each one,—
 The heart to holy life by kindness maun be won.

Among the rest our cottagers retire,
 Thankfu' for a' the blessings they enjoy,
 That they can meet in peace as they desire,
 Nae persecutor raging to annoy.
 Their ev'ning hours devoutly they employ.
 The bairns are a' enjoin'd to tak' their books,
 An' no allow'd to play themselves out-bye,
 For owre their morals strict each parent looks,
 An' a' their idle wand'rings carefully rebukes.

Let the proud City bloated splendour boast,
 In gay luxurious vaunting plenty shine,
 Still O' my country's lowly cottage host,
 Be pure simplicity of manners thine ;
 Nor ever, ever at vain pomp repine,
 Most wretched oft when glittering the most :
 Poor the exchange for trade's exhaustless mine,
 If agriculture's sturdy sons are lost
 If honest cottage worth shall be the mighty cost.

Extended farms luxuriant crops may have,
 Rich sheep-walks may the finest wool supply,
 Wide-spreading luxury's devouring wave,
 May drown the cottager's unheeded cry,
 Haply to towns or other states may hie,
 The virtuous poor to seek a distant grave ;
 But when unfurled banners threat'ning fly,
 Who shall the low'ring front of battle brave ?
 Who shall their bleeding country from destruction save ?

Hardly had Morna concluded, and her attentive auditor ventured a remark, than the news of Mr. Melville's death, and Mr. Douglas's letter were brought by the same messenger. Morna was awhile overpowered by her various emotions. I am again friendless, (exclaimed she, as she listened with streaming eyes to the old servant of Mr. Melville, who faltered as he told the tale of sorrow). I have a friend dearer than I ever possessed, whispered Morna's heart, as Douglas's letter was perused, by eyes sparkling through their tears. Morna's love could not (at a moment so so-

lemn as that announcing the death of her benefactor), wear its brightest hopes, but tenderness pervaded a heart that seemed bursting its snowy barrier, to seek and thank her friend.

Am I to return any answer, Madam, (said the domestic). Morna crimsoned, her bosom fluttered. To write to Douglas was an almost impracticable task, yet to dismiss his messenger without an answer, seemed to her apprehensive fancy disrespectful. The following lines were all that the timid girl essayed :—

“ Heaven will reward you for that kindness the object of your bounty wants words to thank you for.”

CHAPTER XVI.

*Hastings Castle—Douglas attains his
twenty-third year—Elucidations—
Donald and Isabel.*

THE first day our hero felt equal to encounter society, was devoted to a bridal visit. He had not seen Lady Euphrasia since her marriage, and armed by the recollection of her mother's dissimulation, and the charms of another, he believed himself equal to meeting his ancient foe. Hastings Castle was a stately old edifice, through whose lawns and woods the Esk sportively winded ; sometimes clear, slow,

and placid, at others foaming wildly through rough arches, and over fantastic rocks. Entering the mansion by a magnificent vestibule, Douglas was met by Angus, who taking him eagerly by the hand, led him to where his bride, attired by the graces, waited to receive him. May you be happy, happy as you are good and lovely, ejaculated Alfred, as he touched her cheek ! Euphrasia, had Douglas worn his usual gay smile, would have felt confused at the compliment, but there was a saddened expression about his features, interesting and touching, and which caused her to reply without embarrassment, though in terms of affectionate friendship. Douglas looked round the apartment for the Duchess.

My Mother (said Lady Euphrasia), understanding his look, is slightly indisposed, she lives here without constraint, and occupies a suite of apartments formerly occupi-

ed by my father during his life, they communicate with a pleasant garden ; we have our respective domestics, and thus, without being actually apart from us, her Grace seems to have a separate establishment.

A carriage driving up rapidly to the door, interrupted Lady Euphrasia as she was about to express her satisfaction at Douglas having consented to pass a week with his friend, who proposed at its expiration taking his bride and the Duchess to view Glenesk. Douglas, as the equipage passed the windows, recognised the liveries of St. Bernard, and flew to assist the ladies in alighting.

Lillian blushed as she beheld him at the carriage door, and her ancient companions seemed to wear an additional portion of unbended rigidity ; but whether in expectation of encountering the Duchess of Hastings, or in consequence of his appearance, Douglas was unable to determine.

Lillian's compliments to the lovely bride of Angus, were delivered in words of sweetness, and with an action so full of grace, they fascinated ; these charming women seemed, from the first moments of their meeting, to conceive an attachment to each other ; even the sisters of St. Bernard viewed with approbation the bride of Angus, and in compliment to her enquired for the Duchess. When the visitants were departed, Angus retired with Douglas to the library ; here the friends entered into conversation of the most confidential nature, and Alfred, as he described the progress of his attachment to Lillian, owned himself agitated and disturbed at the approaching epoch of his own affairs.

Angus, on his part, spoke of the Duchess, after the duel, whose origin seemed not known to the world. Colonel Bryan when he could with safety return, attach-

ed himself more openly to the Duchess, and his wife talked loudly of a separation; her resentment was, however, appeased by a change in the conduct of the parties. The friends of Lady Euphrasia had, if they spoke not either to the heart or the principle of the mother, convinced her she had outstepped even the wide bounds allowed right honourables; interest induced her Grace to listen to their persuasions, she witnessed the union of her daughter, discarded Bryan, and on Opal introducing her reformation in a sentimental comedy, made her first appearance to the town in the character of a prude.

Angus, from the hour in which Euphrasia became his, felt it his duty to protect and counsel her mother, to whom every respect was paid by them both. The emotion with which Douglas had heard of the arrival of the Duchess, had not been perceived; her Grace had never been fam-

ed for constancy, and Douglas and Bryan, with a thousand others, discarded when they were at the nurse's knee, had alike faded from her particular regards. Perhaps if the Duchess, at the moment we speak of, felt interest for any, it was Opal with whom a sentimental correspondence had been begun, and who was expected at Castle Hastings before she left it for Lord Morven's seat in Caithness.

In the evening the Duchess sent to invite the family party to her apartments, and as she received Douglas without embarrassment, he soon recovered command of himself, and conversed on different subjects. Observing the antique decoration, and its beautiful effect in the apartments, Angus remarked the late Duke had taken much pleasure in them, and the Duchess affected to sigh. The room in which the party sat was long, and lighted by six large windows of painted glass,

the roof of fretwork terminating in innumerable points, the most elongated suspending an old lamp of curious workmanship. Historic pictures covered the wainscot opposite the windows, and at either end, views taken round the Castle, reflecting sweetly in the setting sun; half closed doors at the extremity of the room disclosed a vista of other apartments.

I have often thought (said Mr. Angus), the portrait of Lord Charles in the adjoining room, greatly resembles Mr. Douglas, the expression, the eye, and the general character of the features, are alike.

I never heard your Grace (said Lady Euphrasia, addressing the Duchess), speak of my uncle.

Your father (replied she) forbade his mention, I had no motive for avoiding the subject.

It is strange that the story of this amiable young man is either forgotten, or

concealed by all who must have known him intimately, said Angus.

To shew I am not one of these replied the Duchess, to-morrow I am willing to relate all I know of one who was very dear to me. She sighed as she spoke. To-morrow, thought Douglas, I arrive at the period fixed by my father to solve the mystery of my connections ; he beckoned Angus to the flower-garden, and owned himself agitated by troubled thoughts ; I may said he, on the morrow, be acknowledged by many friends, but a deadly enemy must be revealed ; I dread lest some one I have grasped in friendship, become the mark of my weapon. Will you (cried he) break the fatal seal, (giving him the packet from his bosom).

Angus pressed the hand held out to him, to-morrow, said he, I comply with your request.

To-morrow, echoed Douglas, to-morrow shall I become an approved lover of my Lillian, or be separated from her forever.

My dear madam, cried Angus, addressing the Duchess, as they entered the saloon, oblige me by abridging my impatience, and relate this evening the story of Lord Charles; Douglas may not be with us on the morrow.

Willingly said she, and instantly commenced the following story. But as, reader, some incidents from her connection with the parties were too highly coloured, and others totally omitted, the author with more truth, though with less elegance than her Grace, relates them.—

In the year —, John Duke of Hastings, his blooming bride, and his only brother, Lord Charles Montesk, were prevented by an early and violent storm from proceeding on the Highland road,

the Duke, impatient at having his slightest wish objected, had inconsiderately left the inn at Dulsie-bridge about noon, and at night fall, amid deep snow, became bewildered in the mountainous and wild roads between Coryburgh and Aviemore. Apprehensive from the darkness of the night, of being precipitated into a branch of the Dulnan, that here terminates into small lakes near the high road, the drivers were compelled to stop; the horses, fatigued with the heaviness of the way, were with difficulty prevented from dropping down amid the snow. In this dilemma the Duke was compelled to open the windows of the carriage to the tempest, and hold a consultation with his servants, as to the practicability of returning to the Inn they had left, and should this be impossible, how they might pass the night.— Amid the violence of the storm, the drivers found they had lost the track, and

deviated from the main road ; the situation was therefore a dangerous one, and the Duchess, overcome by terror, intreated her Lord to return.

It is impracticable my love, said he, wrapping her mantle more closely about her shivering form, could I leave you, and endeavour to discover some abode near ; I conjure you not to think of it, cried she, clasping her arms about him.

Lord Charles instantly leaped from the carriage ; come (cried he cheerfully) my English sister must learn to think less of wilds and storms, I shall return before you can miss me. Often have I shot over these grounds, I ought to have knowledge of the way. Stay here my good fellows, (cried he, addressing the servants) watch by the carriage, I do not despair of securing you admittance to some cheerful fire side, (so saying, he took his gun from a servant, and disappeared).

The interval till his return seemed the longest his relations had ever pass'd ; often did the Duchess, regardless of the sleet that beat on her lovely face, expose it to the wind, and endeavour to catch a sound that might indicate his coming. Charles is lost, (exclaimed she, at length, as she sunk back hopelessly on her seat) he has perished. The report of a gun, the signal of his approach, changed the exclamation of despair to that of joy.

Cheer up, said Charles, laying his hand on the door, I have met a friend who will guide us to a Highland home, and give a Highland welcome.

The Duchess now perceived Lord Montesk was accompanied by a stranger, who, addressing her in a manner, that denoted superiority of style to the lower classes, intreated her to allow a large plaid he had brought, to be thrown over her ; and to permit herself thus to be carried to his fa-

ther's. The distance, madam, said he, is not great, and the way is impassable for a carriage : thus conveyed, and escorted by the Duke, and followed by the domestics, leading the unharnessed horses, in about a quarter of an hour, the wearied lady reached a small house, at the foot of a stupendous mountain. Her guide quitted not his fair burthen till he had conveyed her to a large apartment, where blazed a cheerful fire. Donald, exclaimed a young girl, who had long listened to the pelting storm with anxious fear for a brother's safety. The words she would have added, were checked by the appearance of strangers, she drew back with timidity, as Lord Charles, gracefully approaching her, in a few words, explained their situation, and his fortunate *rencontre* with her brother.

Isabel (cried a venerable grey-headed man who sat by the blaze) busy yourself; welcome to all.

Isabel, till reminded by Donald of the Duchess, could not refrain from gazing on the groupe without moving ;—they might have given subject to a painter. In the fore ground stood the beautiful bride, half reclining on a man of noble mein, whose stately port and commanding air, bespoke his rank. Lord Charles had advanced nearer Isabel, he beheld a lovely woman, and was irresistibly attracted ; she gazed on him with mingled surprise and admiration ; in the bloom of life, of animated intelligent features, his eyes dark and sparkling, his figure light and graceful. Lord Charles was allowed by the beauties of a court, to be the most amiable of youths ; what wonder the simple Isabel beheld him as a vision breaking through the gloom of her sequestered life. A frown from her brother, recalled her to recollection, she blushed deeply, and withdrew with the

Duchess to disrobe her from her wet and soiled habiliments.

The young Highlander explained to the Duke, his father's deprivation of sight, and the gentlemen entering into conversation with the venerable man, were struck with the conviction, that, however poor the appearance of his abode, however scanty seemed the all that hospitality now poured from her stores ; they were in the presence of a gentleman, one whose intellects had been polished by education, and who, however he seemed to have quitted the world, knew without hating it.

Donald lost in the estimation of the strangers the more he was surveyed ; a kind of false and haughty pride seemed to actuate all his movements, redden in his check, and sparkle in his eye ; native hospitality had induced him to eagerly guide the wandering strangers to his father's roof, but now he saw them sheltered and re-

freshed, he became alive to the pain their superiority gave, and imagined every approving glance, one of disdain ; an old domestic spread the board with simple fare, and the Duchess appearing with renovated spirits, leaning on the fair Isabel, the Duke and his family sat down, and cheerfully partook of a cottage supper. For a week, the noble guests were detained by the severity of the weather under the Highland roof ; the Duchess who was then of an age to have more of romance in her ideas, than fashion and years had latterly allowed, imagined some mystery lurked under the privacy of her abode, and questioned the old gentleman. Mine madam, said he, is a common story in Scotland, my birth is better than my fortune, a chance exists of my son's becoming the head of his house, meantime he scorns to be considered a dependant, and shuns his nearest of kin. I have myself educated him, and

trust he will not disgrace a father's daily precept ; but dutiful as I have found him, you cannot wonder Lady, that to one like me, the genteel daughter that heaven has blest me with seems most dear.

The Duchess looked towards Isabel, she had conceived for her one of those childish attachments that women of rank often take to girls of inferior condition, making them subservient to the amusement of the hour, gradually lowering their situation to that of a servant, then dismissing them with perverted ideas to a home no longer that of pleasure.

I allow your sweet girl to be worthy your preference, said her Grace, but I would take from you this daughter, and introduce her to my friends, and the circle in which I move, with all the advantages a favourite sister would receive.

I have often wished my Isabel under the protection of some woman of virtue and

rank, (said the old man,) and providence seems to have sent you, Madam, to my humble roof, to secure such a friend to my girl.

My sister, Madam, (cried Donald, who observed with indignation the animated countenances of his sister and Lord Charles at the offer of the Duchess,) needs not the condescension you would shew a Highland girl of simple habits ; her home, such as you see it, however unworthy your residence, befits her best.

The Duchess was piqued ; a peasant boy to look on her, without thinking her will a law, how could this be ? She exerted all her blandishments, and in the few opportunities that occurred of conversing apart with the young stoic, so successfully played off her *agremens*, that when the season, reluctant as yet wholly to resign nature to the influence of winter, put forth a departing gleam, and the Duke's

equipage waited for the travellers, her Grace, who delighted in overcoming difficulties, had the satisfaction of seeing Isabel solemnly consigned to her care, by her aged father ; who, with the partiality of a parent, foretold a thousand happy consequences to his darling from such protection. Donald, overcome by the charms of his noble visitant, had furthered her wishes, and heard her bid him visit Hastings Castle, with the first throb his heart had beat to woman. This did not, however, prevent him from rudely snatching his sister's hand from Lord Charles, and leading her himself to the carriage. The amiable youth did not resent the insult, but waved his farewell till a turn of the road obscured alike the cottage and its inhabitants.

At Hastings Castle, the new married Duchess began a life of splendid gaiety. Her Lord had spent greater part of his

life abroad, but Lord Charles had been educated at St. Andrew's, and known to all the families of any distinction in his native country. To know this amiable youth, was to love him ; all fire, all energy, the flame was pure, the impulse virtuous. His brother was a different character ; he offended no law, he assisted poverty more because his ancestors had so done, but he was cold, and considered rank the greatest boast of man. The Duchess he had married, because she was easily woo'd, and of a family whose origin he believed, when contrasted with his own, would inspire her with humility, and render her subservient to his every caprice. True, her loveliness, the extreme happiness she evinced at being the wife of a Duke, had in the honey-moon awoke him in some degree from his constitutional apathy. It was in this honey-moon she received his permission to take Isabel to the

Castle. Lord Charles, in his encounters with the mischievous god, had not yet been exposed to the danger of such a passion as Isabel could inspire. The arrows lay in ambush, and love watched as the young and charming pair wandered by the waters of Esk, or shrouded themselves in the umbrageous woods to point his darts with artless looks and words.

A few weeks deprived Isabel of the Duchess's partiality, and strengthened that borne her by Charles. She was much admired, but the noble lady, who had thus taken her to society as a sister, the novelty once past, spoke and looked so averse to the declaration, none ventured to repeat it. The situation was a dangerous one for a girl unacquainted with man ; left by the indifference of the Duke, and the dissipation of the Duchess, to the attention of the most fascinating of youths, the reward of the venerable father's hospitali-

ty, might have been the ruin of his child ; had not the honour of the lover equalled the simplicity of the mistress. Lord Charles exchanged vows of love with Isabel, but he resolved on an union with her, when the Duke, on whom he was left dependant, should have given him a brother's portion. Isabel, that her accomplishments might grace the rank to which he was about to raise her, sedulously applied herself to the lessons given her, and relaxed not from her studies, unless to accompany him she loved, in a rural walk. Thus, amid gaiety, was the charming Isabel more a recluse than in her father's cottage. That venerable parent died on the day intelligence reached him that the lives between his son and the possessions of his family, were terminated, and that Donald Macleod was Laird of *Strathmay*. Protect your sister, were the last words of the dying father. His son had deeply thought

on that subject ; an unaccountable prejudice against Lord Charles was rooted in his mind ; he resolved the instant his father's remains were consigned to the earth, to remove Isabel to his Castle in Caithness, and forbid all intercourse with the family in which for the last year she had been an inmate. The blow of her father's death was a severe one to poor Isabel. The Duchess, wearied with her grief, left her at Hastings, whilst she accompanied the Duke on a visit to Stirlingshire. Lord Charles, though young, saw the impropriety of his remaining at the Castle during their absence ; but he daily visited the mourner, and, with the tenderness of a husband, soothed her sorrows. These moments insensibly became happier ones, and when Donald arrived at the Castle, the lovers talked of their nuptial day as if it approached, hastened by the consent of friends.

It was evening, when Macleod, throwing himself from his horse at the gate of Hastings Castle, enquired for the Duke. The domestics replied, he was absent. The Duchess? From home. And Miss Macleod? She remained at the Castle, was the answer. How is this, cried Donald indignantly, are none but *servants* at home? Lord Charles is at present with Miss Macleod, observed the Duke's servants as he advanced. Fiends! exclaimed Macleod, darting forward furiously, and bursting into the apartment where Isabel was standing, her hand pressed in Charles's, as he was fervently bidding her the farewell of the night.

Unhand that lady, villain, cried Macleod; (wresting the hand of his sister forcibly from her lover's,) are there no wantons in Montesk, but a Macleod must be dishonoured.

You dishonour yourself, (replied Lord Charles). For the sake of your fainting sister, I forgive this outrage. Know me better, Donald, (cried he, holding out his hand,) I would protect, not betray Isabel.

And does it not occur to you, that *I might* refuse her on any terms; (said Macleod contemptuously,) what are the Dukes of Hastings, that I should give the heiress of Strathmay to a stripling of their blood. Why are you here, answer me this?

Be calm, Macleod, (exclaimed the weeping Isabel, throwing herself at her brother's feet). For my sake, dearest Charles forgive him.

What, (exclaimed the enraged Macleod,) do you beg mercy of your paramour from me; die worthless woman, (cried he, spurning her as she lay,) I read your guilt in the epithet you have bestowed on him. However unworthy you are of the treat-

ment of a gentleman, Montesk, *can* you meet me?

Lord Charles, though the mildest of men, felt his patience fly before the savage manner and unprovoked insults of Macleod; and without daring to cast a look on the hapless object of the contest, who, stunned by a brother's blow, lay extended on the pavement; was hurrying to the park in order instantly to wipe away the insult he had received, when the Duke of Hastings appeared in the avenue on horseback. Instantly recognising Macleod, he was preparing to welcome him, when he drew back, astonished at the repulsive manner, he assumed. I come for justice, not compliment, said he, haughtily putting back the Duke's offered hand.

The proud nobleman, stung by such treatment, bade him demand his wish and depart.

Restore me that wretch, as she was given to your care, (said the brother furiously). Tell me not of marriage ; I disdain such alliance.

Charles, can you explain this, cried the Duke, after a pause of astonishment ; are you the cause of this madman's entrance to this Castle, and of his insults to your brother. By heaven, added he, losing all patience, I would have such revenge, were you not, Macleod, unworthy of it, as should even obliterate my resentment.

Meet me to-morrow, said Donald, whispering to Lord Charles, at the Copse, below the Bridge of Esk.

I shall not fail, was the reply.

Seeming to forget the hapless being who still lay insensible on the ground, the savage Macleod departed.

Lord Charles rang for assistance, and Isabel was conveyed to another apartment

and restoratives administered by the females of the household, to whom she was much endeared by her sweet and mild manners. The Duke returned to meet the Duchess on the road, and consult with her as to the removal of the unhappy girl from his roof. Charles was left alone with the object of his tenderness ; his heart bled as he hung over her delicate frame, bruised by the violence of a brother, who should have even sheltered it from the winds of heaven. Sense hardly returned to the unhappy girl, ere she threw herself at Lord Charles's feet, and the pitying domestics withdrew to the further part of the apartment.

Promise me, thou most loved, most dear one, exclaimed she, promise me, these hands will never shed my brother's blood ; spare him dear Montesk, give him to my prayers, Charles, Charles, you answer not. Oh ! how shall I bribe you to spare the last

of my house, the only son of a venerable old man, whose spirit would visit me, if I, who hung at the same breast, shared the same smiles, should doom my brother to death ; answer me, life seems to depend on your words, Montesk ; lover, husband, let me not expire, answer, answer with mercy. Lord Charles shuddered as he raised her to his bosom, his cold cheek pressed her's, she shrieked as she felt its chill. Death, exclaimed the unhappy girl and fainted in his arms.

Patience, my best love, my Isabel, whispered Charles, as her senses faintly returned, you can save your brother, I cannot.

Name the terms, (cried Isabel, gaining strength as she spoke) name them, my brother lives.

Be my bride, I can only refuse to meet Macleod as the husband of his sister.

With a look of love, Isabel opened her arms and sunk on the bosom of Montesk.

That evening the lovers stole to a retired part of the gardens, and were united by the pastor of Roslin, who had loved Montesk as a boy, and hesitated not in the office.

On the morrow, the Duke and Duchess arrived, the former called his brother to the library, and sternly addressing him, vowed if ever he allied himself with the Macleod's, he would disown, discard, desert him. I have solemnly sworn this, said he, it is registered in heaven, and from this there is no appeal.

Farewell, cried Charles, I would not have you break your oath. Every blessing attend you, may you live long, and leave your honours to your children.

The Duke started, his brother seemed to have gone like a pleasant dream; he would have pursued him, but a weight seemed to press on his heart, and forbid it. The Duchess wept, Charles had re-

spected and affectionately attended to her wishes, gaiety was banished. Still both believed he would return and give up Isabel; nor did the Duke imagine marriage had united the lovers, and rendered his oath irrevocable.

Isabel and Charles wrote Macleod of their marriage, but at this he became more indignant; and could he have traced the lovers to their sweet retreat in Glen Almond, would have sacrificed them to his fury. Montesk was not personally known in Perthshire, he therefore removed thither, and under an assumed name, remained till his first child, a boy, was born. When Lord Charles left Castle Hastings, the whole amount of the money he could raise was three thousand pounds; with this he intended to seek with his bride some foreign settlement, and their intention was only delayed in its execution, till the tender infant that hung at Isabel's breast

could bear the voyage. It was at this period, Macleod by the simple circumstance of the description given by a peasant boy, who had left Glen Almond to reside with his relatives in Caithness, found his suspicions awakened; and disguised, like the fiend who surveyed the first lovers in their paradise, saw the endearments of the pair, who had sacrificed all to love, and resolved to separate the tenderest of hearts. A few hardy menials, whom Macleod had brought with him, easily succeeded in carrying off Isabel when her lover was absent on one of his short excursions towards the woods; fortunately the boy on whom Isabel doated partook not of its mother's fate, its attendant having taken it out to the balmy air of the morning.

It is needless to dilate on the feelings of the husband; but one existed who could thus steal on him, who would rob him of

peace and joy. Instant exertion was necessary ; Isabel is carried to Strathmay, exclaimed he, thither must I hasten. My boy cried he, as the weeping servant brought him to his embrace, -how can I at once shield the mother and the child ? guard my boy, cried he, grasping the woman's hand tenderly, I will return.

Disguised as a Highlander, his money carefully concealed in his vest, and assuming the dialect of the country, Lord Charles travelled within a few miles of Strathmay ; here observing more caution, he left his horse, and proceeded on foot. As the gloomy and desolate pile appeared, his bosom beat with expectation, but in vain did a lover's eye seek from the high casements to discern Isabel, a lover's ear to list her complaints. The place seemed deserted, no sound broke on the stillness but the sighing of the waves, no form appeared ; and Charles would have retraced his steps, and

believed his love taken to some other abode, had not he discerned something lying amongst the fragments of the more dilapidated part of the building ; and on gaining possession of it, recognised a handkerchief he had seen Isabel wear. Comforted by the certainty of his having actually discovered her residence, Charles mused on the means of letting her know of his vicinity to her prison ; and on descending the cliffs, perceiving a fishing-boat in the creek, got into it, and gently paddling round the cliff, came in view of the windows of the edifice overlooking the sea. Perceiving a female form at the casement nearest him, he endeavoured to excite attention by shouting to the sea birds who built their nests in the heights ; the form, however, appeared not to move, and Charles gave up the attempt. Some days concealing himself in a deep cave at the foot of the height, at length to his asto-

nishment and joy he beheld the object of his solicitude slowly descend towards the cavern, in which, through mid-day and night, he had been wont to conceal himself. In amazement he saw she was unattended, and hastened towards her, a cry of joy evinced he was known, and bearing her swiftly in his arms to the cave, he ventured without fear of observation to vent all his feelings on her faithful breast.

It was evening before the lovers could consent to part, when suddenly recollecting her long absence from the castle, she broke from her husband's arms; and trembling lest her imprudence might endanger the object of her love, was about to hasten to Strathmay. At the instant she was about to quit the cave, the arm of the cruel Macleod, with the aim of an assassin, plunged a dirk into the bosom of her husband, who fell without a sigh. Let the tide wash away the remains of nobili-

ty, cried Donald, with a satanic laugh, to his attendant, as between them they bore the distracted wife to the castle. In the morning no trace appeared ; but the ocean had not rolled its waters over the murdered. A fishing boat from the Orkneys putting into the creek to pass the night, by the light of a fire they had kindled, perceived the body ; and moved by compassion, endeavoured to reanimate it. The wound Lord Charles had received was not mortal, and perceiving their cares successful, the worthy creatures ere day broke, raised their sails for their native isle. Here, under the roof of the simple pastor of these inoffensive and happy people, Lord Charles recovered and planned the escape of his Lady and child from Scotland. The beauty of Strathmay, reader, threw herself from the cliffs, as Mor-na had sung, but it was to a lover's arms she was received, " Heaven protects us

my angel love, cried Montesk, as he clasped her once more to his bosom, your child awaits you in England, we will but seek time to depart for ever from past scenes, to lose past recollections."

The Duchess believed Montesk to have perished by the arm of Macleod, in consequence of his having met him as agreed on the night of his quitting the castle. His sorrowing brother forbade him to be mentioned in his presence, nor were the family acquainted with the succession of Macleod to his family honours. The agitated meeting of the furious youth with the Duke prevented explanations; and when Douglas in London had mentioned his rencontre with the Cynic of Caithness, it had not struck the Duchess, that Strathmay and the Highland boy she had essayed to charm, were one.

During the recital of the story, Douglas was insensibly interested; but it was

not till he surveyed the portrait of Lord Charles, and broke the seal of the letter addressed to Strathmay, that he became acquainted with the truth, that in him survived the child of Isabel and her noble lover. Who then was Morna? The arrival of Janet at Castle-Hastings, and her confession of the part she acted in deceiving Macleod respecting the birth of her charge, followed shortly, and explained to the astonishing friends the last proof necessary to establish the fact of Alfred's being the only heir of the exiled Montesk. Morna, reader, had bent over a mother's grave; that child of error and misfortune of whom Mrs. M'Pherson had spoken. Its simple memorial a wooden rail graved by rustic hands, with the initials J. R. rose in the romantic burial ground of Roslin; and hither, she knew not why, was the fading Morna attracted, and here would her careful nurse seek her when the

dews began to fall. The story of the " dweller of the lonely house," is here related.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Prostitute.

MACLEOD, during the period of his lurking in disguise at Glen-Almond, even whilst his bosom swelled with the darker passions of cruelty and revenge, had indulged in a sentiment falsely called love. Awhile this feeling bears resemblance of one enobling the human breast ; the sigh of rapture, the vow of constancy, the sparkling eye, and eloquence, seem alike in both ; but soon the vision passes, and realities of misery appear ; satiety, indifference, cruelty, reveal themselves by turns, (sad succession) to the unfortunate victim

of credulity; so Macleod lived, so cast from him the being whose innocence he had sacrificed. When the cruel brother learnt from the artless description of the Perthshire boy, that a pair noble in mein, attached in love, beautiful in person, and anxious of concealment, haunted the romantic glens of his native place, he recognised in the description the "beauty of Strathmay," and the youth who preferred her to honour and society. Obtaining from the lad a letter and token of his aged mother, and accompanied by three resolute men, Donald, habited as an inferior Highlander, journeyed towards the Almond. Arrived within a mile of the secluding glen, he bade his followers disperse among the neighbouring cottages, and cautiously meet him every evening at the foot of Glen-Almond. Macleod now hied towards to the lowly habitation in which he intended to abide, till his designs were completed;

and to whose humble inhabitants he conveyed a beloved relative's remembrance. It was evening ere this wild and impetuous being arrived in view of the charming windings of that stream, celebrated in song ; over whose transparent waters hung the birchen thicket, the pastoral bower, and the copse from which the vesper hymn of the feathered tribe, sweetly, though faintly breathed. The scene was such, as did not the passions of man overcome all else in nature, might have soothed the savage to recollections softening to the heart. It is in such an hour, wandering alone amid such scenes, the remembrances of early loves, of friendships formed ere the world taught its lessons of selfishness, finally of consecrated graves, flit before the mental eye of the solitary, swell his bosom with voluptuous melancholy, and wrap his senses in a delicious dream, from which he would not awaken. Macleod

trod this scene of tranquil beauty with other feelings ; never had he known love ; the transitory desire that burned round his fancy when a beautiful woman, in the hut of Avimore, smiled on him in witching allurements, had dispersed as she disappeared ; friendship he had with no man, in all he seemed to read a happier fate than that destined himself ; and now that the clouds of fortune had passed away, he only exulted at repaying the scorn his apprehensive pride had in former obscurity believed to lurk in every eye glancing on him, in every sentence directed to him ; from no grave, forms of affection, accents of tenderness, seemed to arise. Macleod was preparing to trample on the only ashes he had consigned to the narrow house, and in the persecution of his sister, lose all remembrance of the father whose last breath had besought him to cherish with love—her who had none other save him to guard

her from the storms of life. Fatigue and the necessity of collecting the thoughts that coursed each other in his mind, occasioned Macleod to throw himself on the turf and lose himself in the intensity of thought. A sultry summer day had drawn to its close ; the sun only tarried on the distant mountains, touching the varieties of their purple with a roseate pencil ; the clear river gushed amongst the pebbly mounds that rose amidst the waters, and joined with the faint twitter of birds, to lull to repose by tranquillizing sounds. The unhappy man who trod with assassin's foot | these peaceful shades, who breathed revenge, and mingled destroying breath with the balmy fragrance that at night-fall burst from bell and flower, sunk to deep repose. The stars had long glittered above his verdant bed, the night bird warbled its melancholy thrills, when he started from sleep ; the oppression that

had stole over his senses had passed away, for the voice at whose accents he arose was soft, the step that broke on his ear a cautious and gentle one.

The night has fa'n (said a girl, taking a plaid from her shoulders and throwing it over the half recumbent youth), I fear ye'r nae weel stranger?—

I thank ye (cried Donald, unable to divest himself of his native haughtiness, and suit his manners to his garb), I want not assistance—on which side of the brae stands the house of Jean Robertson?

To the left, hard by the fa' o' the burn, I weel can guide ye (said the girl) its my ain hame.

Macleod finding he was conversing with an inhabitant of his intended residence, softened in his manner, and assuming a less authoritative tone, intreated her to lead as he had news of her brother to communicate. Treading lightly up the thyme

strewn activity, the cottage girl preceded Donald to the hut where an aged mother and younger sister awaited her coming from the bleaching; she prattled as she went, but Macleod understood, felt not, the love of a sister towards a brother.

Is that your cottage light yonder? (said he to Jean, as they gained the height.)

No, replied she, 'tis in the stranger laird's, his bonny wife's her lane the day, I met him far up the stream fishing, he'll be hardly returned yet.

Donald looked stedfastly at the light, it blazed more bright, then suddenly expired. A superstitious chill shot thro' the veins of Macleod. Ye're cauld, (said his guide) but here ye'll find warmth, (lifting up the latch as she spoke). Donald lifted the bonnet from his dark locks and darker brow, as he stooped at the entrance of the turf built hovel. The blazing hearth brightened as he crossed the threshold, and

revealed his countenance to the fair girl who had guided him on his way, Donald in wonder rolled his dark eye on her beauty. Jean Robertson appeared to him scarce eighteen, her's was a face gentle in its expression, yet catching at intervals animation from her eyes; sweet and mild in its character, yet intelligent in its changes. One hand parted her fair locks as she gazed on Macleod; suddenly she averted her regards, and blushing deeply, in future avoided the glance of his eyes. It was not the dark intention hovering at his heart she discerned, nor dreamt she the youth was aught above his seeming. Jean had exchanged the first looks of love. Macleod recovered from the mingled surprise and emotion, and advancing towards the fire, addressed the old matron who sat basking in its blaze; near her a little girl busily plied her wheel. Hospitality never ceases to be an inmate of a Scottish bo-

som. Donald, gloomy and morose as from youth he had been, had shewn the virtue when he sheltered the benighted travellers in the hut that in another hour he would willingly have hid from all of human observation ; how much more did the aged widow whose bosom admitted none but pious thoughts and benevolent intentions, feel the wish of parting her mite with the wanderer. Donald was received with honest warmth ; and the good woman thought herself richly repaid by news of the safety of her boy, and that his aunt “ wha was weel to do,” had been kind to him.

And how is the young laird of Strathmay ? (enquired Jean, hesitating as she spoke).

Macleod marked with wonder her manner, and half believed himself known.

No (said Jean, in answer to the question he asked) I have never seen the laird, but

since George wrote us about him, and how good he was to him, I have loo'd him dearly.

Hoot lassie (cried the wife laughing), ye ma'unna gae sae far for ye'r match ; is there ne'er a laird in Glen-Almond ye can loe ?

Dinna jeer me, dear mither, (returned Jean with a sigh and a smile), I'll never marry, but bide ay wi you.

Macleod whilst this conversation was passing, had leant back in the obscurity of the ingle, and looked full on the speakers. The old woman seated in a low wicker chair, neatly, cleanly, though coarsely clad, smiled with cheerfulness ; her lovely child knelt on one knee beside her, crossing her hands over her bosom, and turning her profile towards the stranger ; the younger sister hovered about the blaze, and prepared the simple supper.

Macleod had often entered the lonely cottages of Caithness ; woman had archly smiled, and sought his notice ; but his nature held in contempt, the vassal, and the trifler. In the cottage of Glen-Almond he was differently affected, a new sensation sprung to his bosom, and a while seemed to conceal with flowers the rankling thorns that festered there. The evening meal was served, the stranger pressed, and Donald drawing a stool beside the youthful Jean, somewhat ungenerously led her to discourse of the Laird of Strathmay. In return of this passion so innocently conceived ; her image visited the slumbers of the stranger, the self-love, the pride of Donald had been gratified by her discourse, his senses were awakened by her beauty ; and on his humble couch, from reveries on her attachment, an attachment she seemed unconscious of, he sunk into visions of her loveliness. Macleod held

the inferior classes in too much contempt to hesitate as to the fate of Jean ; he sighed for her possession, he determined on achieving it ; but he hesitated not at fixing the price, at disgrace and sorrow. His bosom filled with a strange and wild fire, seemed a while to forget the horrid purpose with which it had been so lately fraught ; his sister was spared a while, that Jean might wither in his embrace, as an excuse for his stay. Donald feigned a slight illness, he wandered as if for air amongst the woody dells and glens ; around thither, the poor girl whose ruin he meditated, was wont to follow him, solicitous for his recovery, and anxious to anticipate his wishes. At evening, Macleod met his companions in thickest of the shades ; a few words were exchanged, and again they separated, wondering at the delay in the execution of his plans ; since, that Isabel was the recluse Donald under cover of his disguise

had ascertained. One evening having dismissed them for the night, he wandered on along the brow of a gentle acivity abundantly fringed with alders, pine, oaks, and birch, to where an opening in the grove shewed a verdant slope, gently inclining to the romantic stream; on the face of the bank appeared a stone, graven as a monument, Donald approached it, and at the instant Jean was seen to emerge from an adjoining copse, with dejected looks, and slow and mournful steps. Macleod flew to meet her.

You are thinking of Strathmay, my bonny Jean, is it not so? Come cried he, putting his arm round her waist, and drawing her towards the romantic tomb, tell me why this has been built? It's the tomb of Bessy Bell and Mary Gray, (returned Jean); ye ken their story, it's in the auld sang, but let me gae, I see yer better, and canna bide.

Were Strathmay to woo; say my Jean, would ye tarry, interrogated Macleod. Jean blushed, and the stranger clasping her in an unhallowed embrace, whispered his rank, and fatally urged his claim. Jean sworn to secrecy, no longer hesitated to meet her lover ; all former scruples, upbraidings of conscience, convictions of the beauty of virtue, and deformity of vice, were silenced by the sophistry of passion. Macleod's honour of love was short, his gloom athwart which the gleam had passed, became more dark ; and accomplishing his design on his sister, he left without remorse, her in whose bosom he had planted its first vice. In Jean Robertson, fatally was the remark verified, that woman knows no medium ; and extreme innocence driven to despair, changes to the extreme vice ; poor girl, at first, she endeavoured to persuade herself, Donald could not have left her for ever, that he would

return, and the groves of Glen-Almond witness the joy of their reconciliation. Months passed, winter came, and the seugh moaned through the leafless groves. Jean wrote her brother, she ventured to enquire for Strathmay, but the youth was no more, and his sorrowing aunt, in her answer, forgot to mention Macleod. I will walk to Caithness, and give up my hapless life at his door, said the victim of cruel passion ; alas ! Jean felt incapable of the journey. 'His child is innocent, (whispered the poor girl), why should I destroy it ? Again she wrote, and to Donald ; no answer came, the hour of shame approached, the eye of every friend seemed bent on the fearful Jean ; she flew to the woods, wept over the tomb, near whose melancholy memorial, she had bade farewell to virtue, and sat hours by the stream, meditating even to madness ; she woke at length from her dream, woke to become

a mother. One dreary night the peaceful inhabitant of a cottage, situated near the river, and at a distance from any abode, was roused by a plaintive voice, begging admittance ; the door was quickly unbarred by the woman who was the sole resident of the hovel, and to whom Isabel's boy had been consigned. Forgive me, (cried a wan and feeble creature, dropping on her knees) I need a woman's pity—a woman's assistance ! Save me ! Save my aged mother, whose heart would break did she know my shame !

That night Jean became a mother, and leaving her babe with the humane creature whose compassion she had craved, crept back to her home. Her mother saw she was ill, and lavished on her a tenderness that struck daggers to her heart. Her sister too, now advancing to womanhood added to her sorrow ; she resolved to abandon her home, and cast herself on the

world's wide stage ; the wintry wind had ceased to mourn, the chill drops to fall, and jocund spring advanced, but Jean ceased not to sigh, to shed the bitter tear:—no spring returned to love !

Dinna leave ye'r hame my pure lassie, cried the poor woman, at whose bosom the offspring of guilt hung beside the pledge of Isabel's affection. Press me not, press me not, (cried the afflicted Jean), I can na mair bear hame, na mair find pleasure in what I have maist loved.

Leading her sister to the grove where Macleod had clasped her to his heart, Jean embracing her, besought she would comfort her mother when she was gone ; the weeping girl, who believed she only alluded to her death, listened with awe as she spoke.

Be dearer than I have been, better, Mary, and how ken ye but God may per-

mit me to hear this, and that it may restore me to happiness.

Mary clasped her to her breast, but could not speak, they returned together to their home, and Jean that night, lingered long in a mother's embrace, in the morning she had fled, none knew whither.

In thus consigning herself to unknown dangers, the unhappy Jean acted under the impression of derangement; but, as the haunts of her youth receded from her weary steps, she breathed more freely, and on her entrance into Edinburgh, during a walk of some days, during which she had scarce tasted nourishment, she had sufficiently recovered to start with affright at the gulph into which she had plunged. Without money, with scarce a change of raiment, the beautiful Jean entered the metropolis, at the season of gaiety, the race week. Too weak, from recent illness to work; too timid to beg assistance,

without knowing whither to direct her steps, she coursed the crowded streets ; nor till rudely accosted by a party of young men, seemed sensible of being an object exciting observation. Alarmed at the expressions these young men of fashion condescended to direct to a helpless unprotected woman, she entered a shop, and exhausted and terrified, sunk on a seat, and burst into a flood of tears. Her agitation called round her the owners of the shop, and excited the attention of an elegant female, past the bloom of life, who had been purchasing some articles when the poor girl, with wild apprehensive looks, rushed in. With a glance of much interest, she advanced to Jean, and taking her by the hand, enquired concerning her home and friends.

• I have none, (cried the poor girl,) all is gone.

Poor creature, (ejaculated the humane

stranger,) I will be your friend ; will you trust yourself with me ?

Jean looked wistfully at her, and placing her hand in her's, suffered herself to be led to an elegant carriage that awaited Mrs. Edwin at the door. During the drive, the new friend of the Highland girl, soothed her sorrow with the tenderness of a mother. The residence to which they were driven, was elegant ; servants and every appendage of fortune, bewildered the peasant ; who, struck at the change a few hours had effected, believed herself under the influence of a dream. She was conducted to an apartment by Mrs. Edwin, who, waiting till some refreshments were brought, bade her consider herself at home. Jean wept herself (as an infant) to rest. She awoke refreshed ; and a female attendant attiring her in a genteel dishabille, she was ushered into the room where Mrs. Edwin sat at her *dejeune*. Jean

was out of her sphere ; her thanks were scarce articulate ; her movements, (notwithstanding the beauty of her figure,) ungraceful ; still Mrs. Edwin seemed charmed and overpowered by the fascination of her manners. The poor girl made her acquainted with every particular of her history, save the name of her seducer.

Mrs. Edwin paused awhile, then said, before my dear Jean, I offer you consolation, I must afflict you ; are you aware that you are lost to the society of your former intimates ; that to your mother you can never return ; that your lover despises you ; that you are incapable from your delicacy of hard labour ; and that henceforth you will be rejected by your fellow-creatures, seeing you have no character.

Spare me, spare me, (sobbed the unhappy girl).

Now listen to me, (cried Mrs. Edwin,

raising and embracing her,) I too have been forsaken. I have revenged myself on the sex ; I despise prejudice, and hate the cold chilling females that look down on me ; their fathers, their husbands, and sons, afford food for revenge.

The simplicity of Jean, led her not immediately to comprehend the drift of this discourse. Mrs. Edwin's explanation threw the unhappy girl into strong fits, from which she only recovered to become all that fascinating, though abandoned woman wished. Attired elegantly, she accompanied her to the Theatre a few evenings after, and excited the attention of a nobleman, remarkable for his admiration of beauty, and contempt of accomplishments. Jean's deficiencies appeared charms in his eyes ; and, nearly insensible from the conflict of her mind, and the wine she was persuaded to take, she was consigned to his arms by the infamous woman to whom

she became a source of considerable wealth. Without remorse, Mrs. Edwin received on her bosom, the following morning, the tears of anguish shed by her who had passed another boundary of vice.

Macleod, (exclaimed she mentally), feel you no pang at this moment ; no throb of remorse to warn you ? I am for ever lost ; mother guess you my misery ; innocent sister, can your imagination conceive my infamy ! Thus mourned Jean, but at length despair and hatred of the world, rendered her the most abandoned and hardened, as she was the most beautiful of the Scottish impures. Mrs. Edwin had only hired her house and servants during July and August ; and these being past, retired to a small residence in Rose Street. Miss Robertson, as she was now called, lived with her, and as she had engaged masters in several accomplishments, and by application and a quick capacity, had pro-

fited by their instruction, few could believe the Lais of Edinburgh, and cottager of Glen-Almond were the same. Long ere her total abandonment to crime, she knew her child had been consigned to Macleod, as the offspring of his ill-fated sister, and never was she heard afterwards to mention being a mother ; but one principle seemed to actuate her, the destruction of man. Fortune, character, constitution, and peace, withered in her insidious embrace ; twice only did she recoil at the path she trod, at the serpent self. Mrs. Edwin, whose intemperance hurried her to the grave, died a death of horror. The sinner clung to the world with convulsive grasp, as the wide tomb, the unknown eternity opened at her feet ; blaspheming heaven, confessing deeds of atrocious guilt, she sunk “ a blacken’d course.” The companion of her wicked hours was left to watch beside her ; wo-

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men shunned them ; revellers came not, and the Almighty that night spoke amid storms, in awful thunder ; his angry eye seemed to pass in the lightning's flash, and the miserable idol of licentious worship, sunk appalled, and mourned in bitterness of spirit. Then the changed Jean felt something of former days, of the feeling that dwelt in her bosom, ere vice became familiar. Jean again felt, when to the surprise of all, the most blameless youth in E—— rose to plead her cause, when she was cited to appear before a court of conscience, and answer for the irregularity of her unhappy life. The truly virtuous turn from the prostitute with feelings that prompt at once pity, and a sensitive shrink from an observation of crime ; others had watched the impure, listened to her cries, and with immodest eyes, sought from an opposite window to out-gaze the unhappy creature ; by these was

she brought to be *judged by men*. Young R—— had never spoken to Jean ; his habits rendered him a stranger to the harlot's abode ; but when none spoke for her, when her own familiars averted their eye, and prepared to inflict punishment, he nobly advanced and pleaded for her, as one who had no friend, as one set as a mark in society, one on whom vice had shed all its misery. R—— sought not to extenuate her disorders, or cast a veil over the irregularities complained of, but he made manifest the motive of her accusers and rendered their testimony of no avail. She was dismissed, and on entering the outer apartment, threw herself on her knees before R——. Regardless of the crowd, she wept at his feet, and feeling once again tenderness to man, extended her arms towards him. He fled from her, and never after did Jean and her defender meet, but rumour spread the slander of

her enemies, and the youth who had saved her from public punishment, was compelled awhile to retire from the resentment of the over-righteous. If Jean experienced in this instance one throb of pity from man, woman never bestowed it. The wicked ones envied her the fatal and degrading publicity she had acquired ; the good trembled lest their pity should be misinterpreted ; but a third class existed, whose curiosity even led them disguised to the abode of shame. Shortly after the conduct of Mr. R—— had excited the malevolence of evil spirits, a young and beautiful girl of family, hearing whilst she sat in a milliner's shop, an order come from Miss Robertson ; persuaded the maid of the house to exchange clothes, and with a band-box on her arm, ventured to the abode of the courtesan. She was shewn to an apartment, where shortly she was joined by the object of her

imprudent curiosity. Jean, though the sport of passion's stormy wave, intemperate in her habits, and subject to many hours wherein her heart sought to deceive, but could not, was yet in the bloom of her fatal beauty ; and, at the time in which her female visitor came, was elated by those who flattered to destroy. She tried on by turns every gewgaw of fashion shewn her ; smiled as the mirror reflected her charming form, and enquired exultingly of the stranger if she did not think her beauty as rich in its varieties as were its lovers. Her auditor had not passed the tenderness of life ; she sighed in proportion as Jean brightened, and at length sunk into melancholy ; musing from which at length, she was roused by a violent rapping at the door. Terrified, she gave an involuntary scream, and starting from the sofa, seemed in quest of some place of concealment. With almost horrible stern-

ness, Jean turned on her an eye of fire, and demanded what, whom she feared? Protect me, I beseech you, cried the trembling girl, I am Miss —— ; be not angry at my wishing to see you ; my parents will reward you, only save me from insult.

Miss Robertson paused ; then in a broken voice said, I am the person sought ; fear nothing ; return to your home, and when you think of me, bless God you are not as one of us. The humbled girl wept as she left the abode she had imprudently sought ; her levity faded before the appearance of youth and loveliness, perverted to the purposes of guilt ; she shuddered at the affectation of gaiety Jean had assumed, at her parting words, her mournful look that spake unutterable things. The career of a prostitute is short, Jean decayed at eight and twenty. Now came the hour when lovers deserted her, and

friends were not known even by name. The gains of vice had been mostly spent in revelling, in obtaining the opiates of thought. Days the solitary forsaken Jean would sit, her head reclined on her wasted arm, and think till her heart was like to break ; then madly starting from waking dreams of death and judgment, adorn the painted sepulchre ; and, rushing to the public eye, come on the vision of the sensualist, a shadow of the past, an emblem of the future. Why start they at my appearance, why recoil as I advance, said Jean, as alone she returned to her silent habitation ? The mirror in which she had been wont to gaze, stood before her ; where was the eye of brilliant blue, rolling orbs of languishment and love ; where the full but finely proportioned form, too often clasped in riot's fold ; the rosy lips, beliers of the heart, feigners of affection, seats of falsehood. All were changed ;

the glass told truly; hollow were the eyes, wasted the form, pallid the lips, once the theme of song, the toast of inebriation? Thought why visitest thou such a being? Memory, why with all thy witching recollections comest thou to the wretch whom all forsakes? Blessed providence, these are harbingers of peace, severe though their footsteps press on the heart, they prepare it for celestial visitation. Why, cried the unhappy Jean, as the man of skill, the humane G——, press'd her uncertain pulse, why waste on me time so invaluable, care so precious? seek the virtuous wife, the tender mother, I deserve not mercy here or hereafter.

You shall meet with both my good girl (said G——, as he dashed the drops from his eyes) you must quit E——.

Whether can I go (exclaimed the mourner) who would receive me?

That shall be my care (observed G.—) and the following morning he rode over to Roslin and consulted Margaret Macpherson.

There's nathing I wad na do till please ye my bairn (said the old woman on whose knee G.— had been bred) but wae's me what wad the lave say tae sic an inmate?

Harkee, (said G.— angrily,) do you expect to be received in heaven?

God be with us cried Margaret, can ye doubt it?

Then (observed the christian) you must meet this poor sinner, ay and witness the joy over the one that repenteth.

Weel cried the auld wife I canna doubt ye, but these daft women wad turn Melchiesadik himsel', and now I think on't wha sent a' the comforts yestreen to my house, I fear it was ye, and a' was for the sinner.

My wife sent them cried G.—, with anger in his eye. His old nurse could not bear his anger, and besides, had a heart tender as an infant's; she did not long resist his wish, and when Miss Robertson was carried from her carriage, and laid on her humble bed, the sufferer started with affright; so tender was the accent, so kind the words addressed her, she believed none but a mother could have uttered them. Margaret grew tenderly attached to her charge; she had shrunk from apprehended looseness of manner and speech in her expected inmate. Something assuredly she thought would remain to indicate the past; but when an emaciated humble sorrowing being bent before her, as full of misery as dishonour, one who loved, yet trembled to talk of heaven; who envied the deformed and the lowly their portion of innocence, and who blest her for the most trifling attentions of hu-

manity ; the good woman could not resist the claims on her heart, but loved the unhappy girl ; and in her humble, untutored, unadorned prayer, intreated for her forgiveness and life. The latter was ebbing fast, yet the least gleam of the lamp was bright. Jean, some weeks before her dissolution gained strength, and when no prying eye was near, would lean on her old attendant, and slowly walk down the height. When all but her who had erected a temple to the living God in her penitent heart, were assembled in the house of prayer, she sat listening to the hymn of praise wafted on the breeze ; or as the river gushed over its pebbly bed, the sigh of foliage kissed by winds, or the song of birds kissed her ear. Leaning on Margaret's shoulder, she would close her eyes and whisper in a voice tremulous and mournful, " These sounds were familiar

to my childhood ; as I listen my better days seem to return, and all the horrors entering between the hours of innocence and death pass away as some dream of a distant fancy." The night before the spirit of Jean left the tenement of clay round which it had long unpleasantly fluttered, Mrs. Macpherson found her charge in a light slumber, one hand pressed her pillow to her cheek, the other rested on a large bible that lay in the bed ; the step, tho' cautious, broke the last slumber. Ye hae been reading (said Margaret, looking attentively on the book) ?

Jean's voice, broken and low, was scarcely articulate as she answered in the affirmative, and made signs her nurse should repeat to her the passage. Drowned in tears, the good woman read, " And behold a woman in the city. which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in

the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment ;

“ And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. -

“ Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him for she is a sinner.

“ And Jesus said, her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

“ And he said unto her, thy sins are forgiven.”

An exclamation from the sufferer checked the reader, an awful silence succeeded, and trembling, Margaret bent over the

object of her solicitude. The struggle was over at the words of the expiator—the sinner had ascended to the throne of judgment and of mercy.

CHAPTER XV.

The misanthrope—effects of romantic attachment.

MACLEOD, in the solitudes and bleak sea worn cliffs of Strathmay, thought not of Jean; gradually his mind yielding to gloomy impressions, became partially disordered; he shunned society, or sought it but to glean matter for hatred of his fellow men. To no one object but Morna, the unknown daughter, did he shew attachment, and tracing no resemblance to the sister whose supposed fate he could not hide from himself, was caused by his cruelty; he looked on her, and beheld no

feature of reproach ; yet the soft smile, the flowing tresses, and the tender attention of her manner, might have recalled the beauty of Glen-Almond to the mind of her seducer. None other ever filled the arms of Macleod ; he gathered additional sternness from years, and women became to him more an object of contempt than desire. In Caithness his early obscurity was little known, hence he loved it. The whole of Macleod's character consisted of perverted virtues ; pride of birth should prompt superior deeds, scorn vulgar vice ; in him it burst forth in acts of oppression and cruelty ; morality changed to a savage insensibility to all the finer feelings, and philosophy taught him only apathy. Morna at length seemed to harmonise this savage ; she bent to his will like the tender osier beneath the northern blast. Insensibly Macleod became humane ; yet he blushed at

his weakness as he termed it, and affected an additional portion of severity; his mind was thus struggling with its clouds. When Douglas first beheld him, could Macleod have scanned the mystery of the shipwrecked stranger's birth, have known the son of Charles and Isabel rested beneath his roof, how would he have been divided between the regrets and resentments of the past—drawn by kindness to the son, a dagger from the father's breast—by affection to the stranger, soothed the spirit of his fair and unfortunate mother. Yet though unknown, there was something indefinable to himself that attached Macleod to Douglas; and he had left Caithness with an intention of visiting him, when he met with the fatal accident that terminated his career. Janet, notwithstanding her coarseness of manner and harshness of speech, loved Morna; her grand-mother, the parent of Miss Ro-

bertson, had been the companion of her youth ; she could not forget the hour of pain and sorrow in which that wretched sufferer had given the babe to her bosom, and though her ignorance led her to the imprudent step of throwing her charge on Mr. Douglas's protection, it was simplicity and want of judgment that erred. Janet could never bear Morna's naming her supposed mother, the unfortunate Isabel ; such mention recalled to her the deception she had been guilty of towards Macleod, and filled her with fears of his future resentment. When his emissary was sent to Glen-Almond, and easily found the nurse of Isabel's child, he could entertain no doubt but the one he beheld at Janet's breast was the one he sought, particularly as with a view to mislead search, the child of Isabel had been reported by its parents to be a girl. Ere Janet yielded Miss Robertson's babe to its father, she stipulated

that she should accompany it to Caithness, and left Glen-Almond without bidding farewell to any. Few, indeed of former intimates remained. Jean's mother had silently, sorrowfully departed from life a few weeks after her Jean's disappearance, and a worthy lad who loved her innocent Mary had taken her to his relations in Stirlingshire, where she lived a contented and virtuous wife.

It has been observed, the offspring of illicit love, partake of a warmth of character, a sensitive feeling, a fatal sensibility, unknown to others; they have much to encounter, the sufferings of the mother creates a tender attachment in the child; tenets of virtue must even be forsaken in the earliest years; the young mind must accustom itself to disregard the creed of churchmen, the page of religion; to believe there are rules of morality *too severe*; and that nature speaks in truer accents to her

children, this must be believed, ere the parent can be exonerated by the being, who has hung at her breast and basked in her eye ; hence the female, whose birth has been regarded as a reproach, round whose cradle pressed no congratulating friends, whose hapless mother has borne the pains without the joys, becomes either the hardened sensualist, or the less dangerous, more endangered sentimentalist. Morna cherished in her bosom from infancy the spark that ultimately preyed on life, her sensibility in its commencement dwelt on the story of Isabel ; the concealment of her feelings enjoined by Janet in the presence of her uncle, added to the interest her young fancy took in the fate of her supposed mother. When Douglas appeared, her ardent feelings changed its object ; she beheld him, all that youth seeks in love, as superior to the few rude beings surrounding her abode, as the page she opened during her solitary

hours, exceeded in its language and description, their speech and the sterility of their native cliffs. Removed to London, whither she had joyfully hastened at the first suggestion of Janet, she read nothing in the gratitude of Douglas for her attentions during his illness, but proofs of peculiar attachment. If she loved him when rescued from death by a singular providence, and cast on the shores of her desolate abode, how much more did she doat on his presence, when again he escaped his impending fate, and became doubly dear. Douglas at Glenesk, had walked, conversed with her, and read as it were her heart ; a novice to the world and man, at the moment she caught an approving glance, a tender smile, from the wavering youth, she believed that look, that smile would never change ; Douglas wishes me to become accomplished, I owe to him this, were her thoughts as she was left

to the care of Mrs. Macneil. Janet ere she went, declared to her charge a belief, Mr. Douglas meant her for his wife, and Morna wept and smiled by turns as she listened, but soon she was compelled to recall the delusions of hope. Douglas discontinued his visits, and when in despair of seeing him in private, she ventured into public, her sight seemed to fail her as she beheld him, all gaiety, his eyes sparkling with animation, and saw too well their regards were bent on perfect beauty; a sigh deep and energetic broke on his ear, he turned and beheld the pallid and trembling girl, the rose had left her cheek, the smile her once blooming face, but shame-rushed its crimson, over the lily of her face. Morna's companions returned elated to their home, conversation broke on their rest, all seemed gaiety to them in the scene they had quitted, and contemptuously they questioned the simple girl as

to her feelings on her first appearance in the haunts of pleasure.

Morna sighed ! never again wished she to behold a sight like that she had witnessed ; her health became more delicate, her spirits sunk, and wounded by the contempt of her companions, and the disappointment of her love, she hailed the summons of her medical friend, to more quiet scenes, and the privacy of Roslin, with something like pleasure. A while Mrs. Macneil visited her ; that lady had as she thought delicately expressed her penchant for Mr. Melville, by sending him in the rooms a faded rose from her uncovered breast ; but the worthy man died without suspicion of an attachment, that rendered Sappho Macneil the derision of E—

The joy Morna mingled with grief at the death of this worthy man, had but slender foundation ; she dreamed of Douglas, and forgot Lillian ; she expected the

blooming youth on whose idea her high wrought feeling rested till health and life were fast decaying, would often see her ; that the hour of his instruction, his converse, and tender cares would return ; an unaccountable silence, an unexplained absence, however succeeded ; and Morna though on her the skill of Doctor G—— was exhausted, gave fatal symptoms of premature decay.

Douglas, meanwhile, aided by the friendship of Angus, (whose disinterested nature allowed him not to hesitate, though the possessions of Euphrasia would be diminished, by the succession of Alfred to the family estates), asserted his claims with success.

The good Earl St. Bernard, who had long beheld the partiality of Douglas to his fair ward, rejoiced at the prospect of his attaining a rank that would entitle him to

an alliance with one as nobly born, as she was richly endowed by nature. Lillian to whom her lover's prospects were known, wondered at Douglas absenting himself; and the Earl's sisters feared their manner had wholly disheartened the youth. But Alfred, however he panted to throw himself at Lillian's feet, and pour out the overflowings of his attached heart; forbore to visit his lovely mistress till every obstacle to their union was removed. Meantime, he resided with Angus and his lovely bride at the castle, which the Duchess resolved to leave for London, instead of pursuing her original intention of visiting in company with her daughter and Angus, Lord Morven's estate; and accordingly, that Lady, tired of the absence of every thing which had been wont to form her amusement, left Hastings' Castle, assuring Douglas, she sincerely rejoiced at his consanguinity. Our hero, perhaps gave her

Grace little credit for the sincerity of the assertion, we will however reader in the next chapter, explain the reason of the Duchess's journey, and its consequences.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Dramatist appears on the Scene—Union of Age and Youth—Writing for the Stage.

THE Duchess had scarcely reached Carlisle, ere Opal appeared to escort her to town, a gallantry not wholly unexpected by her Grace, who had corresponded with this stage-struck writer during her residence in the North; and assuredly the letters of the dramatist and the dowager would have been a curious collection of simples for the entertainment of the lovers of natural history, had the bookseller to whom her grace conveyed them in her

own equipage, been hardy enough to publish them. Their effect was not, however, wholly lost on the public, as Opal, in his Melo Drama of Ambrosiand and Dolchono took a lover's care, that none of the amatory trifles of her grace's pen should escape notice, and a prologue and epilogue, written by Colonel Parkmarch, a particular friend of the parties, hinted at the marriage that soon after astonished the town. Scarce had the report of the Duke of Beau-fenetre's wedding Lady Morton, occasioned half the prattle, half the tittering conjectures. The girls of fashion crowded to Hastings' house to obtain cards for the important day, and Opal was actually besieged by venders of beautifying washes, preservers of teeth, carmine spreaders, and the Sovereign of Tetes, Mr Prossie, who kills his own bears on Wigmore manor.

Congratulating authors crowded in, in shoals, and warmly praised Opal for the

manner in which he had cast his characters ; and a favourite actress, the Ambrosiand of his piece came to embrace and approve, so that their rouged cheeks, in contact exchanged the colours of the rose. This little arch Mrs. Dovetail, on her way from a prison where her enamorata dwelt, to a theatre where she was received in consideration of her personal attraction ; had heard the news of Opal's intended devotion, and came to retract from her severe determination, most haughtily avowed to the author, of never allowing herself to be blackened, however swarthy the heroine he might produce for the amusement of the town. As Opal admired the actress's manner better than her theatrical performances, her apology was easily admitted. Opal now acquired consequence even with managers,

“ The Time was, ere dramatic griefs began,
An author was just treated like a man.”

and in such a night as this, perhaps a writer netted several hundreds for his play ; alas, for economy ? Is it taste that holds the glass now as the man of judgement reads ? Is it the comedy that will live to be played by the sons of the present actors, that is brought forward to delight the public ; or is it mummery so cheap, the merest chit of an actress hurries over her part, and walks up the stage careless of the speech addressed to her, Were it not that Shakespear is still brought forward, our dramatic boast, the judicious relief to fancy palled by the sweet insipidity of the flowery writers of the day ; the frequenters of the theatres might collect the very essence of modern comedy by eves-dropping, where some amorous apprentice woe a Branburn-alley fair, or that of tragedy, by wandering to the paths frequented by the vicious, and listen to disappointment, sensuality, avarice, and blasphemy as

they ring their horrid changes on the passions. Opal had less to answer for than the writers to whom I allude, his sugar'd words, and cloying scenes, offended mostly common sense; half the audience looked at the scenery, and listened to the songs; the other at themselves, or the delectable author, who smiled from box to box, and received his garland of myrtles. The Duchess of Hastings had conceived for this interesting young man, rather an extraordinary attachment; she declared (as women of many loves mostly do) that till now she had been a stranger to the tender passion; (yet reader, this was the hundreth dart she had drawn from Cupid's quiver) and asserted with more gravity than she was heard, that she would never love another—admirable constancy at sixty-five! Opal was not rallied by his acquaintance; to court a Dowager is considered a minions business, to marry a

prudent one ; but should her Grace forget her vow of constancy, however appearances are in favour of her keeping it inviolate, Opal it is feared will obtain but trifling damages, all follies considered.

The marriage was celebrated with considerable pomp at Hastings' house, and the Old Duchess of Beaufenetre led out the bride. In an ancient ballet, her Grace's favours were sent down to Scotland, they were nothing new in England ; and Angus felt rather rejoiced at the responsibility of the Duchess' conduct, being removed from his mind, though he could not forbear smiling, as he handed over to Douglas the morning paper, setting forth the number of tickets issued on Opal's benefit night.

Lord Morven just groaned over the ceremony, and departed north, where a pair more acceptable to hymen, expected him. Angus loved his uncle with the ten-

derness of a child, and his Euphrasia's heart warmed to the good old Scot, who always toasted her as the best and the bonniest ; besides, he had to welcome Douglas as a connection, and busied himself with all his intellectual, and parliamentary strength, in furthering the succession of Montesk to his family honours ; those most interested in placing obstacles in his way, thus coming forward to accelerate the event, rendered the business easy, and Douglas sworn into his seat as a Scottish Duke, and put in possession of considerable estates, rendered his fair cousin as independent as before. Angus would have opposed this, but the noble minded youth, insisted on purchasing on - liberal terms the family seat, and on her residing on it till an heir to Angus was born.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The reward of attachment.

WHEN Douglas, for so we will term him, had become secure in his elevation, and was placed by fortune in its firmest height, he left his kind relatives at Castle-Hastings, wishing, amid the shades of Glensesk, to write to the Earl St. Bernard, and there receive his answer. This worthy nobleman could not but admire the change that fortune made in the stile of this young favourite. Douglas, of doubtful birth, of mysterious origin, and considered far inferior to Lady Lillian, had ventured boldly to assert his passion with its

object, in defiance of the frowns of his sisters ; but now that he was more, in the worldly scale of estimation, than her he addressed, Alfred was the humblest of suitors, and so far from his letter to the Earl being that of certainty, it was that of doubt respecting the sentiments of his fair ward. This was a delicacy that had its full effects on minds of the old school. The ladies Carr saw in it a shade of the retiring love of their day, and the Earl giving them the letter, requested they would read it to Lady Lillian, and request her sentiments of the writer.

That ye may depend on (said Lady Janet) I shall conduct matters wi' a' delicacy, and nae doubt ye'll hae ye'r answer before many months hae gane by.

Na, that wad be too soon (observed Lady Maud), its na on record o' ony o' her house, gaein an answer before a year or twa, unless in case o' death.

I'll take the letter myself (cried the Earl impatiently). And now my sweet ward (said he as he concluded and peered in her retiring eye) what answer am I to give this timid youth?

What think you of a Duchess? have you learn'd to bear that load of title?

That I have long been sensible of the merits of my lover (answered Lillian) I believe, my dear Lord, you are aware; I cannot therefore refuse his suit, and leave my answer to the discretion of your noble sisters.

Not so, (interrupted the Earl), I should never live to the bridal. Order my carriage? (said he to the servant who answered his violent summons).

Whither are you going (enquired Lillian)?

To Glenesk; prepare your wedding dress.

Shocking, (exclaimed the Earl's sisters when they heard of his precipitancy).— Was ever any thing so indecorous? (addressing their Abigail and confidant, who, shrugging up her shoulders, as she drew a lock over one of Lady Maud's wrinkles, remarked) that the only thing, now the mischief was done, was to put the best face on the matter they possibly could.

Tak' the muckle key (said Lady Maud) and gang till the coffer, there's a sattin has nae seen the light since my grand-mither was buckled—in that i'll appear.

The young Duke received the Earl with less ease than was usual to him. The few first words, however, put him out of suspense, and he joyfully accepted the invitation given him for the following day.— Alfred was then admitted to a private interview with Lady Lillian, and tenderly and rapturously expressed his feelings at the approaching union with her virtue.

Another, my Lillian, would think of and praise the beauty that was to bless him ; but lovely as you are, I idolize more the mind that will chasten mine and shed a brilliancy on the last of life.

The difference of opinion existing between the Earl and his sisters respecting the duration of the lovers' courtship, was renewed, on the subject of the place where the marriage was to be solemnized. The Earl coincided with the young folks in naming Glenesk, and choosing the day to be spent in rural amusements. At this the ancient maidens revolted, " What, a' the usages o' their fathers to be laid aside."

To be brief, Lillian prevailed ; and though she was compelled to a promise of laying a week in state in Queen Street, the nuptials were performed at Glenesk. A late autumn bestowed its most delightful day ; the woods mellowed in their tints,

spread to the river in waves of foliated gold, and a warm sun excited the song of the feathered tribe. Lady Euphrasia and Angus, attended by the worthy Morven, met the Edinburgh party at the gate of Glenesk. The villa was adorned with sweet simplicity to welcome its future mistress, and in the gothic library an elegant breakfast was spread for the party; before the repast was ended, Euphrasia observing Lillian's blushes leave her cheek to paleness, walked with her down the shadowy avenue leading to the cascade, and putting her arm of friendship round her, gently bade her compose her thoughts.

But tell me dear Euphrasia (said the trembling Lillian), when you vowed so sacred an engagement to one so dear as Angus, in sight of so sacred a witness as heaven, did you not tremble as I do?

I did my love (said Euphrasia, embracing her), but I remembered my duty would

be my happiness. Think how many are sacrificed at the altar, and let us, Lillian, smile that we are reserved for a happier fate.

Lillian turned, and entering the room where her lover sat, gave her hand to her guardian, who only resigned it to her husband. After the ceremony the groupe of friends wandered about the beautiful borders of the Esk, Lord Morven acting as beau of ceremony to the auld maidens of St. Bernard, and the younger people dispersing over the gardens, and witnessing the rural sport of the tenants of Hastings, who in their holiday clothes were assembled on the opposite bank of the river, and found pleasure in the rural scene and rustic festivities of the day. Lady Lillian was an object on whom none could look but with admiration ; so gentle in look, so graceful in mein, so sweetly was she attired. As the female reader must be appre-

hensive the muckle key had brought from the 'coffer a dress similar to Lady Maud's in which, to the country folks she appeared, as she stood with an arm stuck to her side on the bank, somewhat like an extinguisher; we shall sketch the simple costume worn by Lady Lillian on her bridal day. A thin white sattin robe, bound by a pearl zone, clasped her fine form, her locks were tastefully fastened by a string of the same, over which her varied coloured ringlets played; her dove like eye chastened in its glance, wandered from friend to friend in sweet confusion, and as if afraid of the sound of her own soft step, she presented as lovely a picture of timidity and innocence as of grace; perhaps none but Lady Euphrasia that day remembered the tender hearted Morna. Angus had been requested, during the hurry of business in which the young Duke had been involved, to order every comfort should

be supplied the purse of *her friend* could procure, and to Euphrasia her husband had recommended her. This kind as lovely Lady twice saw Dr. G——. on the subject of her malady, and though her symptoms at first were deceitful, the skillful observation of this humane man could not long waver; he informed Lady Angus he entertained no hopes of her surviving the autumn. When this fatal presage was communicated to Angus, his friends nuptials approached, and he forbore to marr its festivity by the knowledge of the poor girl's situation. A week was spent by the new married people at Glenesk, when they yielded to the intreaty of the Lady Carrs, who had fidgeled strangely at sic a pastoral bridal. Queen Street now exhibited a scene unparalleled in the annals of Edinburgh; the lovely Duchess's door was crowded by visitors of friendship and of curiosity; dinners of state

were daily given, and the ancient dames seemed themselves again. The morning was the only time when the quartete of friends could venture out without form ; and, though the air began to grow chill from the Highland hills, they usually ventured out after breakfast, leaving their elder friends to arrange the plans of the day. One morning, the ladies, leaning on their chearful companions, were wandering in the precincts of the Abbey, when Lillian called the Duke's attention to a party that were walking quickly away, as if to shun observation, and remarked with a sigh, they were probably unfortunates confined by necessity to the neighbourhood.

I am convinced I know them. (said Alfred) Excuse me my love, an instant, (withdrawing his arm from the pressure of her's,) Angus, I fear these are the Mahons.

The Duke's conjecture was right, for

when the gentleman he quickly followed, perceived he wished to accost him, he stopped and lifting up his head, disclosed the changed countenance of the eccentric Irishman. Alfred was touched, and never did his bow or manner express more respect than now to the dejected sisters of Mahon, who clung on their brother as ashamed of the notice of one who had known them in more fortunate circumstances. Our hero's quick eye and thought took in at once their situation, and beckoning the friends he had parted from, whilst Angus was employed in attentions to the brother, placed a hand of each of his sisters in Lillian's, with the kindest of introductions. Welcome my love ; the affectionate sisters of one of my earliest friends, my school-fellow, one who has often both beat and carressed me. Lillian help me ; chide them for not appearing amongst our bridal visitors. Mahon was overcome, and the Duke

seeing his situation, took him by the arm, and bidding Angus escort the ladies up the Calton, delicately enquired the extent of his difficulties, and chid him for not applying to him. I have long seen, Mahon, the generous thoughtlessness of your course, but why feel shame at owning your unsuspecting nature confided too freely, and your means extended not equally with your liberality ; your sisters too, I cannot forgive you this Mahon, they ought to have been protected by the Duchess.

Good God, (exclaimed Mahon, putting his hand to his forehead,) this generosity overpowers me. All the contempt I have experienced from my own familiars, has not reduced me to the weakness this has. Alfred saw by the countenances of Mahon's sisters, as he returned to them, that his Lillian had poured balm on their wounded spirits ; he did not return to Queen Street. till he had called on Mr.

M'Intosh, Mr. Melville's late man of business, and now his ; and explaining as far as was necessary, Mahon's affairs, and the interest he took in them, gave him every direction and order for their arrangement. Mr. M'Intosh took in his hand to the obscure lodging of the Irish unfortunates, a note from the Duchess of invitation to the Miss Mahons, and so delicately had she contrived to remove every scruple they might have felt in point of appearance, and so warmly did she press their residence with her some months, that the brother clasped them to his breast, and bade Mr. M'Intosh describe to the Duchess the gratitude he felt incapable of writing.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Mahons appear in a new light.

WHEN the lovely Lillian appeared in the Edinburgh Theatre, a few evenings after to witness the performance of Johanna Baillie's inimitable play of the Family Legend, all the eyes in the house, were turned towards her box, and no little astonishment prevailed, at the sight of her companions ; who with altered looks, beaming gratitude to their patroness, were handed in by the Earl and Alfred. I question whether even the Campbell's and the Maclain's were attentive to the performers that evening ; the Mahons were well known, as the

libertines of the city frequent the walks of the Abbey, in the hope the fine girls, driven by the distress of their relatives to its haunts, may fall into their snares. Though by no means unprincipled in his actions, Taymore, when he entered the Duchess's box, was somewhat confused at the sight of Clementina Mahon, whom he had divers times obliged, by the pointed admiration of his manner, to retire from the walks to her obscure abode. She had carefully concealed this circumstance from her brother, and indeed since his misfortunes, had vied with her sister in displaying the few advantages of their abode ; and in hiding the many insults they received, even from that sex in whom want of tenderness towards the unfortunate is *crime*. Clementina too, could not hate young Taymore, and he not only haunted her steps in public, but her thoughts in private. She crimsoned as the Duke introduced her as

the Duchess's particular friend ; and scarce could cast her eyes towards her admirer, who, on his part, did not immediately recover from his confusion ; the more particularly as he saw the females of his family attentively regarding him from an opposite box. We will return with the reader to the period when the Mahons were the intimates of noblesse the first in fashion, the extremes of profusion. Two school girls, and a wild, liberal, thoughtless brother, who doated on their very caprices, entering on the gay scenes of the English metropolis, might be reasonably supposed neither examples of prudence, thought, nor economy. The gay world awhile seemed at their beck, they sported on the destructive wave ; the brother handsome, ardent in his affections, careless of his expences, was every thing to woman ; and his sisters shewy, lively, and what is called accomplished, might have been, (but

fortunately were not,) every thing to men. Gold melted away in the heat of dissipation; credit too evaporated; but, what of that! friendship remained. Mahon could at will obtain a lucrative and honourable situation, such as might suit a gentleman, and an idler; he had been offered it a thousand times by my Lord Sinecure. Mahon wrote; no answer was returned; he called, (press of business was urged by the man who so wholly devolved all trouble on another, that seduction and picking his teeth were his sole employ.) Mahon could not be admitted; he met his Lordship some evenings after at an entertainment, and thought himself fortunate in the rencontre, "My Lord I called on you respecting the offers of service your Lordship has so often made me, I own I am tempted to retract the resolution I formerly made, and take your Lordship's advice relative to —."

My dear fellow, (cried Lord Sinecure, interrupting him,) what devilish fine limbs that girl has ; can you not contrive to tell her I said so ?

Your Lordship (replied Mahon, willing to believe he had misunderstood the Peer,) does not seem to remember the lady you speak of, is my sister.

And what difference, my good fellow, does that make ? (observed the libertine, casting a look at Mahon, that shot through his veins) He instantly left the room, and early in the morning received Lord Sinecure's fire, who having, as he said, winged the goose, declined further trouble, and walked off the ground. The town rung with his honourable conduct, and the ingratitude of Mahon to his patron. Poor Miss Mahon came in for her share of the contempt lavished on her brother. Every one was denied to her visits, and soon the gayest and most frequented house in town

became the most solitary. From altered friends, the Mahons turned to altered tradesmen; obsequiousness became insolence. Often had these priests of the altars of fashion intreated this infatuated family to wear, and to use the articles presented to them, that celebrity might be given, and the world of 'Ton follow their lead. Now the case was altered; Mahon received insult, though his intention was to act honourably, and excited suspicion by the very conduct that should have removed it. One gay disposer of cabinets, of scarce and classic couches, and who boasted of intrigues with women of fashion, as he said, "in the way of trade," sneering as he spoke, and affecting not to recollect a name on his list of payments for some thousands, refused to wait a month for a hundred pounds; and the Irishman indignantly threw nearly his last guinea down, and silenced the impertinence of an extortioner. Return-

ing to his home, he found his sisters in tears, and though he could not prevail on them to own what had thus agitated them, he truly guessed that they had likewise met with repulses where they had conferred obligations. He, however, never heard the truth; namely, that Madame Bassier, on finding as her lynx eye fell on the altered countenances of the fair Mahons, that all was not right; chose too to find it extremely inconvenient to wait even a week, and by dint of audacious perseverance, acting on minds weakened by sorrow, soon came to the truth of their brilliant career having reached its wane. What a discovery was this to a woman of the foresight of Madame? The Miss Mahons were lovely, and had been seen in advantageous lights; they were known sufficiently for many to wish them known better. The convenient French woman was in raptures, and had explained the resour-

ces the fair Irish women still possessed, so plainly, that Phelem M'Tarfy, their footman, had just finished kicking her down stairs, as his master returned. " Arrah, (said Phelem,) if our lads are all fire, ye capmaker to Beelzebub, 'tis no reason our women should be tinder, d'ye see."

Poor Mahon, his sisters whom he doated on, hung about him, tender, but helpless as children. He who so lately had many friends, was now bereft of all. He tried to exert himself. Girls, (cried he exultingly, some days after,) every one is paid ; we'll off for little Ireland.

Do, (exclaimed both sisters in a breath.) Whilst they spoke, a servant entered with a letter ; its contents were a dagger to Mahon's heart ; his Irish agent, so far from remitting him the expected allowances, had actually drawn on him for repairs to Castle Mahon.

We'll to Scotland, girls, (said he in a mournful tone).

The girls sighed, and a fortnight saw them settled in the Abbey, and forming part of a society, consisting of the most dissipated and the most unfortunate of human beings. The first could do little good to the morals, or the latter to the spirits. Mahon here only added to his embarrassments, though he avoided the consequences of them. His sisters knew nothing of economy, and all the three used to elegance, tried to grasp its shadow. However the good people of E—— may be famed for hospitality, this poor Irish family experienced little of it ; and their indifference in one respect, would have been tolerable, had it been consistent and extended to other matters ; but the Mahons could not even weep without remark. The poor girls, who had the remains of fashion in their stile of habiliment, were

criticised with unfeeling severity ; and one old lady who had remarked the tender attachment of the sisters to their changed and dejected brother, scrupled not to declare her belief the love too strong to admit of relationship. How happy, reader must the kindred of this lady be in the strength of her attachment ! The poor girls could not wander about the vicinity of their abode, without being followed by a crowd of idlers, whose illiberal remarks and invidious looks, drove them to their shelter ; but how comfortless their abode ! Their once gay and handsome brother no more hailed their entrance with rapture and communicated some proposed plan of pleasure ; but, leaning on his hand, surveyed them in gloomy silence, or bewailed their deprivations with bitterness. Mahon had consulted a lawyer, who unfortunately finding his account in bewildering his employer, advanced him nothing

towards his emancipation, and at the moment the Duke met him, he was literally so entangled in his toils, that the effect would have been undoubtedly fatal, had not friendship afforded an asylum from his misery. Mr. M'Intosh employed himself in his affairs with much ability and unwearied assiduity ; and, at the time Miss Mahons astonished the "unco guid" by their appearance under such auspices ; their brother, though he declined at present joining the Duchess's parties, saluted his sisters as they left him with his former animation and pleasure.

Taymore, finding the bright eyes of Clementina beamed forgiveness, ventured occasionally to address his conversation to her. He supped at the Duke's, and finding his mother and sisters were silenced by the marked attention paid the fair Irishwomen, by every individual of the noble circle assembled ; ventured to express his

admiration of her fine voice, and on the following evening to intreat her hand at the Rooms. The Duke, (who knew Taymore), was not displeased at seeing the impression Clementina had made, and offered no obstacle to the partiality. If the company were surprised at the appearance of the sisters ; the handsome Mahon leading down the lovely Lillian, through the dance on the evening previous to the family leaving Edinburgh for Glenesk, occasioned no common remark, and there were not wanting who ventured to observe the matter to Ladies Maud and Janet ; but these maidens drew up in so stately a manner, and with such crested necks at the remark on her Grace, that the meddlers were fain to be silent in future. Lady Euphrasia, who approached her confinement, retired with her husband and uncle to Castle Hastings, and the Duke ordered a door to be opened, communicating

through its woods with the cascade walk at Glenesk, by which the ladies could facilitate their daily intercourse. The party at the villa consisted of the Duke and Duchess, and the Mahons ; the former being compelled to visit London for a month, left his Lillian in the care of Mahon, who regarded her with a sentiment nearly approaching adoration. The spring being considerably advanced, the Duchess mentioned to her friends at the Castle, her wish of taking the Miss Mahons to Roslin in the ensuing week, and regretted Lady Euphrasia could not accompany them. Angus declared his intention of making one, and remarked, that poor Miss Macleod, if capable of any pleasure, would rejoice to see them. Lillian seemed to start as from a dream, and reproached herself for her seeming inattention to Morna. On this head, Lady Euphrasia set her at ease, by mentioning the care that had been taken.

of the poor orphan ; but, fearful the appearance of the changed girl might surprise the Duchess, she made her acquainted with Doctor G——'s opinion.

Poor Morna, (sighed the compassionate Lillian,) I must hasten my visit, lest it be too late. My Alfred will grieve at this ; I rejoice he is not here.

Angus thought his absence fortunate. No doubt existed in his mind of his friend's being tenderly attached to his lovely bride ; but he suspected the disorder of Morna proceeded from an unfortunate affection, and that for the amiable friend of her youth.

CHAPTER XX.

A Scene at Roslin—Morna's death.

A LANDAU and four drove Lillian and her protégés, accompanied by Angus and Mahon, on the following morning to Roslin, where the beauties of the scenery began to bud and bloom. Esk gushing past the nodding ruin, and projecting rock, glistened in the sun beams, and quickly effaced the reflection of the woody banks in its clear stream. The ladies were delighted, and though Mahon could not refrain from the nationality of giving the Duchess a particular account of the wonders of Killarney, he did not refuse join-

ing in the praises of his sisters at the existing scene. Lillian, the moment she could with propriety, took the arm of Angus, and whispered him to guide her to the cottage in which Morna had taken up her abode. He complied.

How tranquil, how beautiful! (exclaimed the fair Duchess, looking around her as she reached the bower) the scene is adapted to tranquillize the spirits. All the rich prospect of Roslin here opened, but the glen had yet an air of seclusion, so still was its solitude, so embosomed with wood. Margaret was at her wheel, and came forth at the call of Angus. In answer to his enquiry concerning her fair charge, she replied, tears starting to her aged eyes: Wae's me, she's crept to the kirkyard; she'll sit for days there, and never heed th' hours as they gae past, or the dew as it fa's on her bonny face; she's altered

sae ye wad na ken her, I wad nae have ye see her.

The Duchess passed her hand across her dimm'd eyes. The good woman who saw she felt for the subject of her artless discourse, continued it.

I dinna like, said she, to prevent her gaeing to poor Miss Robertson's grave seeing her sae much attached to the spot ; but it's nae gude, for she leans her head on the damp sod, and weeps ye'd think her heart wad break.

How lang has this been, (enquired Angus)?

Wae's me, ever since I shewed her a letter, the poor misguided creature had written ae day when she was wrang in the head, and Miss Morna ca'd her mither, and an unco heap of daft sayings.

Angus who knew from the explanations that had recently taken place, that Morna was the daughter of the unhappy

Miss Robertson, was inexpressibly affected ; nor could he resist Lillian, as she begged him to shew her the spot where Mrs. Macpherson had said she was likely to be found.

She's aye there, (said the good woman, leading the way). Lillian as she came in view of Jean's grave, and saw something like a human being extended over it, turned pale ; and Angus observing her changing countenance, would have turned, but she shook her head, and advanced, to where Morna lay. The simple rail was encircled by her wasted arms, her head like a lilly withered by some rude blast bent down on it, her eyes were fixed on the grave. Angus looked on her ; scarce could he recognize the once blooming Morna in the emaciated object before him. He spoke kindly to her, but observing she seemed not to notice him, endeavoured to raise her from the ground ; she resisted,

but suddenly perceiving Lillian, a recollection appeared to shoot athwart her mind, and gazing stedfastly on her, she murmured, I know her. Do you my dear Morna, said the kind lady, taking her wasted hand in hers; do you not remember too, your friend Douglas?

- It is a crime to remember him, (said the poor girl, sinking again on the grave) but tell him my heart broke in blessing him.

Uttering a faint scream, the Duchess flew to support her, but life had fled; and the unhappy Morna had given up her breath on the cold bosom of her who gave it.

Ah me, (sobbed Margaret), that I should live to see the day, that these aged hands should wrap in their winding-sheet twa sae bonny, and that I loo'd see weel, I maun gae to my grave, for life is nae worth without them.

Angus perceiving the Mahons advancing, he beckoned them to the spot, and Lillian nearly insensible, was conveyed to the carriage, and taken to Glenesk. Her gentle nature had received a shock from which she did not recover for weeks, nor till she heard Euphrasia was a mother, did she smile, though the attentions of the grateful girls she had patronised were exerted to withdraw her mind from its melancholy contemplation. Her beloved friend with her lively boy in her arms, was however an object on which she looked with pleasure; and the arrival of the Duke, to whom the moments of absence had been inexpressibly irksome, succeeded in removing her melancholy. The friend of Morina did not hear of her death with indifference; he remembered her, blooming, gay, and innocent, he sighed at the reflection that she had long been only the last. Her remains were laid in the grave of her mother, and Margaret wept over both in

bitterness of grief. I shall not lang bide awa frae ye, said she, as he left the kirk-yard ; and her prognostic was verified, for the old woman took to her bed, from whence she was only removed to the place of burial. The writer has sat in Roslin church-yard, at the evening hour, when scarce a breeze disturbed the foliage of the glen below, or ruffled the clearness of its romantic stream ; she has seen the robin twitter, and lightly tread over the wild flowers that grew on the grave, when suddenly her meditations were broken through, and the idle and the dissipated have taken her seat beside the green mound ; to such its cold inhabitant was once known, the daughter of thoughtlessness and vuce. Alas ! could the voice that once raised the song of their midnight orgies break its fetters ; the form awakening passion draw from its breast its sheeted shroud, and disclose the ravages of death ;

how would the son of riot recoil, how madden at the view ! Poor Jean, ONE of mercy, of purity died for sinners, and to HIM thou hast flown !

CHAPTER XXI.

Caithness's proposal of Marriage.

THE baptism of Lady Euphrasia's boy, was attended with much splendour; the lively mother wrapt in a mantle of white lace, and clasping her babe, looked interestingly beautiful; a stranger would have supposed Lord Morven the happy father, so rapturous were his sallies. Ladies Maud and Janet deemed merriment at a christening very indecorous, and scrupled not expostulating with him on his deviation from gravity; but he rendered his offence yet more heinous by snatching a kiss from

each of their "Apple John" cheeks, and in this he was followed by the gentlemen present, to the infinite discomfiture of the dames. A cheerful day (enlivened by the good humour of Mahon, who by the friendship of Alfred was restored to his estate and himself,) passed, and in the evening, the magnificent rooms of the Castle were thrown open to the Ton of E——. Clementina Mahon, again became the partner of Taymore, between whom, and her brother, an intimacy had taken place, extremely agreeable to the young lady. The lover this evening, found an opportunity of urging his suit, and after supper, when the ladies had retired, mentioned his wishes to Mahon. Nothing prevents your marrying my sister, (said the Hibernian) but one insurmountable reason; Taymore could scarce forbear smiling, as he begged Mahon would mention the obstacle.

Nothing but want of fortune. After much arguing, the brother and lover agreed to refer the matter to the Duke on the following morning, and toasting the union retired to their pillows.

The Duke of Hastings heard with pleasure the proposal of Taymore, for the Duchess's favourite; and succeeded in removing the objections of his mother to the alliance, by taking the trouble of reading the pedigree of the Mahon's reaching to the steps of the Irish throne. The widow was dazzled, and the genealogical tree spreading its fame among the retailers of news in E——, the strangers met with great homage. The marriage of the fair Hibernian and her Scottish lover, was however, deferred till the return of the friends from Caithness, whither Lord Morven pressed them. Strathmay now belonged to Alfred in right of his mother, and Lillian was gratified at the idea of be-

holding the spot where her beloved was saved, to render her the happiest of women. Lord Morven would not go north without the little heir, and declared a bonfire should be kindled on every hill round Morven-house, the night of his arrival in the country of his ancestors.—More of festivity or of hospitality the peasantry of Morven never witnessed. The Mahons ruled the dances held at the Earls, and attended by the lovers of reels many miles round; the Ladies Carr to the etiquette of receiving the visitors; Euphrasia the comforts of the poor, and the Duchess and the gentlemen occasionally in all. The first day Alfred and his bride could disengage themselves from the various entertainments given by the Earl, they visited the castle of Strathmay, now only inhabited by an old domestic. Over the bosom of that deep on which the shipwrecked Alfred had been wafted with

safety, a still calm rested ; the quivering sun-beams played on the waters, and the vessel slowly glided on in the distance undisturbed by the dormant winds and waves.

The lovers walked on in silence, contemplating the scene, and buried in thought to the portal of the castle. Here Alfred casting his eyes to the fair creature he led, perceived her suffused in tears,

Heed me not, cried she, faintly ; can I look unmoved on the scene in which you were so miraculously preserved. Her husband pressed her to his bosom.

I too, my Lillian (replied he) am alive at this moment to new feelings, renovated gratitude ; my life was here preserved ; but when I bent my knee in thankfulness, and raised my prayer to heaven, I knew not providence had called me to life, and chosen me from among many, to render me the happiest of human creatures ; to

unite me to an angel, and bestow on me the means of succouring my fellow creatures.

Sweet Morna (exclaimed Lillian), why do you not welcome us here? why cannot I embrace and bless you for the interposition that saved my Alfred's life? Tears coursed each other down the Duchess's cheeks; she thought of Roslin, and hid her sighs in the bosom of her best friend. Alfred too, had remembered Morna; he passed the spot where she had often sung her plaintive dirge to him as she sat at her wheel. He was now in the apartment where she had once hovered round him with kind services and affectionate solicitude. Her soft step in fancy trode lightly along the echoing passages, and all seemed gloomy, only because Morna's smile had departed. Sweet consolation to those doomed to experience no return of attachment in life. The remembrance of their love shall creep sweetly on imagination,

and him who gave no return whilst the vital spark burned, shall, when the bosom that idolized him has ceased to beat, think of all her love and all her woe, and sigh that the vision has passed away. Alfred, who had preserved a copy of the strains, to which he had delighted to listen, took it from his pocket and read it with a kind of melancholy pleasure to his beloved Lillian.

MALCOLM AND MATILDA.

A Highland Dirge.

Dark roll'd the waves round the rock of St. Kilda *,

Sunk was the moon in the mist of the storm ;

Dim was the eye of the weeping Matilda,

Tears did its lustre transcendant deform,

At the foot of the rock where the sea-weed entwined,

Its black slimy fibres to catch the cold stone ;

Matilda was found in a crevice reclined,

A crevice she often frequented alone.

* One of the Hebrides, or Western Isles of Scotland.

Behind her some sheep on the summits were bleating,
 Above her some goats on the precipice stood ;
 Their eyes with Matilda's the coming wave meeting,
 Or backward reverted to pick their wild food.

But not for a moment the eye of the mourner,
 Wou'd turn from the horrors attach'd to the view ;
 Though now to her feet the rude billows had borne her,
 The wreck of a fish-boat and one of its crew.

"What care I," she cries, "though the tempest shou'd
 blow me,

"The navy of Britain my grief to appease ;

"Ye proud heaving billows a jewel ye owe me,

"Surpassing in value the grandeur of these.

"Some where in your bosom my Malcolm is floating,

"O ! point me the place and I'll hie to the spot,

"And kiss those pale cheeks that your waters are bloating,

"That of. I've seen ruddy at home in our cot.

"Blow, tempest, blow, till ye rake the sea's bottom,

"I'll patiently wait—yes, though chilly I be ;

"Blow, tempest, blow, ye perhaps yet may get him,

"And throw the pale corpse of my Malcolm to me !

" Though chilly I be, in my arms I will press him,
 " And thank for its kindness the proud swelling wave ;
 " At our cot in the shroud of a lover I'll dress him,
 " And dig in the church-yard for Malcolm a grave."

O'ercome by her grief and the cold of the weather,
 " The shiv'ring Matilda sunk down on the shore ;
 The foot that had foud her was Edwin her brother,
 He flew to his sister—a sister no more !

The pale hand of death had dissolv'd the connection,
 That binds us together in union to live ;
 In the arms of an Edwin she finds that protection,
 She piously wish'd unto Malcolm to give !

CHAPTER XXII.

Visit to Strathmay.—More Marriages.

ALFRED and Lillian spent the day at the Castle ; its temporary possessor, a distant connection of the late Laird's, had never resided in it, and every thing remained in the state the Duke had been accustomed to behold it, during the time he lived there with Macleod. The cynic's books, his scattered papers, various articles of his uncouth habiliments, and unfinished implements of aquatic sport, lay promiscuous round. Alfred seemed as if the years intervening since his residence in Caith-

ness had passed away, till recalled by the soft voice of Lillian to sweet recollection. In the evening they pursued their way down the cliffs to the caverns, the tide was out ; and gaining one of the most accessible of the cavities ; here probably my father (said Alfred) hid himself awhile from the observation of Strathmay ; here embraced his Isabel, and received in his bosom the weapon of her brother.

Behold confirmation (cried Lillian, pointing to a projection of a smooth stone in the cavern).

The Duke advanced and saw a rude engraving. A father's hand (exclaimed he) ! Lillian, as she read the initials of Montesk and Isabel ; pressed her lips to the spot with a respectful tenderness to both the living and the dead, that sunk on Alfred's heart. We will erect here, my love, (said he) a monument to the exiled lovers, and every year, my Lillian, pass a month

at Strathmay in honour of their memory: We shall be the happier and the better from withdrawing thus awhile from the crowd, and of conversing with beatified spirits. We love, my sweet wife, as ardently as my unhappy parents; heaven avert from your pillow the sorrows of my mother. See (said Alfred, pointing to the cliff above) this must be the spot from which the mourner leapt. Montesk's boat could only anchor here. Lillian raised her eyes to the height; a sea bird rose from the point, waving its white pinions, and soared out of the reach of her attentive gaze, giving at once an idea of the danger Isabel incurred, and her last ascent and purity. Night had advanced when the Duke and Duchess returned, music and dancing resounded through Morven House, but unwilling to disturb a train of thought,

“Pleasant but mournful to the soul,”

the attached pair retired to their apartment. In the morning Angus presented a dear friend to Alfred, "Do you not remember the stranger, from whom I parted at the ferry the day we first met."

Captain Irvin (exclaimed the Duke in a tone of pleasure), I have long wished your acquaintance.

I am told (said Irvin gaily) that your grace has brought to the wilds of Caithness, four of the handsomest women in Scotland; introduce me I beg, I am perhaps the only man in the country that could withstand their attraction.

We will charm you with our discourse; (said Miss Mahon, gaily) which like you best, the Scottish, Irish, or English accent, for all mingle in our conversations.

I've a shrewd guess, Irish, said Angus, nor was he mistaken; Julia was interested greatly by the prepossessing appearance of Irvin, and was sufficiently romantic to

think him more worthy of a fair woman's love, than one less unfortunate. She attached herself to him, and soon Irvin, if he missed her gentle voice and kind services, seemed to find the hours heavy. Mahon, with all the generous and humane feeling of his nation, seemed to consider Irvin as a superiour being, whom all ought to serve and all must admire. His sister's attachment, therefore, met no discouragement on his part. and when she owned to him she thought Irvin's deprivation rendered him more interesting to her, Carol caught her in his arms, and giving her a hearty kiss, blessed her for a dear generous girl,

My dear Julia (said the Duke, some days after) Irvin surely loves you, but what return can he expect? can a handsome Lady forego the pleasure of being gazed at?

If it were as your Grace says, replied the blushing Julia, I should have the consolation of withering unperceived.

Well observed (said the Duchess) and be it known to you, that I am in Captain Irvin's confidence, and must not have my favourite despised.

Despised ! (exclaimed Julia, bursting into tears) who could see or know Captain Irvin, without loving him ?

That is exactly what is wanted (observed Angus) and now I'll seek your brother and talk with him on the subject.

Mahon could have but one objection, such a one as few brothers would have probably brought forward but himself, Julia's poverty ; but as this was not considered of sufficient force, Captain Irvin having lately succeeded to the property of a distant relation, his scruples were overruled, and Julia became the wife of Irvin.

A year or two ago, observed the Duke, and I should have thought Julia Mahon the last woman who could make a man like Irvin happy; or have contentedly given up her youth to a life so retired as his must be; but she is changed in all but warmth of heart and generosity.

Julia, replied the Duchess, has owned to me her disgust of a gay life, and as her cheerfulness is not sacrificed, I do not regret it.

Poor Julia had indeed seen what is termed high life in its pure light. In a few short months the idol of fashion, and the object of its contempt, she had no wish to try again such friendships or such pleasures; but contentedly devoted herself to the happiness of the amiable Irvin. She is acquainted with the story of his early love, and chides him if he terms her not Caroline. Taymore, who could ill bear an absence from Clementina, came over unin-

vited, though most welcome, to Lord Morven's, and was united to his mistress on the same day, Julia plighted her faith to Irvin.

There is something extrême^y seducing in all these marriages (said Lord Morven, kissing Lady Maud's hand with great gallantry) How beats your rigid heart my bonny dame ?

I cannot think my dear uncle (cried Angus, half smiling at the air of prudery with which Lady Maud spread her fan between the amorous old Peer and herself,) why you live alone ? why do you not marry ?

There's a disinterested heir for you (cried Morven); but there is sense in what he says Lady Maud, and as I canna bide lang awa frae Caithness, and my bonny niece winna stay a' the time wi' me, it becomes necessary, as Angus saith, that I maun be in love ; sae my Lady Maud,

(rising and bowing to her with great solemnity) I gae ye a week to consider whether it maun be wi ye'rsel.

Lady Maud's week was not spent unprofitably; at its end she surrendered, and though the antiquated lovers were extremely beloved by the party at Morven-House, the young folks found it impossible not to be diverted at the scenes their intention gave rise to. The marriage, at the Earl of St. Bernard's request, was to take place in Queen Street, and summer having nearly fled, the happy party of relatives, with the exception of Irvin and his bride, and the Taymores, who, after a tender farewell, departed for Stratherrick and Dumbartonshire, in their road to Edinburgh.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Story concludes.

WHILST Lady Janet is preparing several curious particulars of dress to be worn by her as bride-maid to her *youthful* sister, with whose easiness of conquest she is but half pleased ; and the gaudy folks of Prince's Street, walk and talk about the unco-queer buckling, we will retire gentle reader, to the Duchess' dressing-room, where the English papers and dejeuner are spread. Alfred looking hastily over a paragraph in the morning, handed it to Lillian, who read as follows :—Lord V—i—n, is at present the devoted slave of the Dowager

D—— of H——. The *author* not having succeeded in *correcting* her Grace sufficiently for the matrimonial *press*.

The sweet Euphrasia will grieve, (observed Lillian).

Lord Vain is a most incorrigible puppy, (said Alfred,) this is vice without temptation, (how men *alter* reader?) Vain will but proclaim her infamous, and then throw her off; when, as before, she will seek her amiable child, and affect reformation.

Who does this allude to? (said the Duchess).

Alfred, looking over her as she read, saw the following finale to Bryan's harmony.

“The dashing Colonel, who about two years ago married an *heminent* sugar-boiler's daughter; has, it seems, been cloyed of his sweet acquisition, and having left the lady for more courtly beauties, gave himself little trouble about his matrimonial

engagements. Mrs. B—y—n, however, had heard of *love* and *constancy*, and knew she had purchased the life-right of the Colonel to both. Her caresses being slighted, she meditated dire revenge, and assembling a *common council*, laid a trap into which the Colonel completely fell. A billet, a dark night, and a strange carriage, brought him to Cateaton Street ; where, to the expected fair one, proved a wife and the attendant graces, a dozen of her friends ; who, with *sweet* and *gentle* remonstrances *a-la-Pussaide*, woo'd him to the paths he had forsaken.

“ For your sakes, (cried the enraged Colonel,) I forswear the sex ; and, breaking from the embraces of his wife, flew down the stairs, and left town for the wilds of Northumberland. The gallant Colonel's rash determination respecting the sex, we however consider as the effect of the *strange* situation he was placed in, name-

ly, the arms of his wife, and make no doubt, on consideration, he will consider it as one of the vows more honoured in the breach than the observance."

The Duke made even less remark on this paragraph, than the foregoing; he was a generous enemy, and wished Bryan a better wife.

And now all Queen Street was in commotion, for the hour approached when the virgin Maud espoused the batchelor Morven. The strange and solemn preparation gave the whole the air of a funeral, and the gaping multitude, with lifted eyes and open mouths, looked awe-struck as the bride appeared at the windows, arrayed in black velvet, stiffened with faded embroidery. She looked like a royal coffin, and wove the arms of her family in cunning workmanship on her *cauld breast*. Through Angus she had made her *particular* request Lord Morven would restrain

his raptures, and not offend her delicacy by even hinting his admiration. Gods, my beloved, (said the gay messenger to his Euphrasia, as he related the curious errand he had been charged with,) look, look at Lady Maud, and tell me if this is necessary ; by all that's cold, she is the very Nova Sembla of the passions.

No sooner had Angus been chidden away, than the Duke came, followed by Mahon, who could not, however he respected the parties, refrain from admiration at the amatory proceedings of the house. Precisely at three, the couple were married, and after the ceremony of breaking a cake over Lady Morven's head, that of the salute being dispensed with at her particular request ; the antiquated pair and their solemn bride maid, were put into a travelling carriage ; and, with the pace of a hearse, it conveyed them out of Edinburgh towards Bernard Castle, where they were

to spend the honey-moon, undisturbed by the sallies of the young people. The moment the grave pair left Queen Street, Euphrasia ordered the communicating doors of the elegant rooms to be thrown open, and received the elegantes of the Scottish metropolis in a manner worthy the occasion. A splendid dinner and ball was given; and it was on this evening that Mahon, enchanted by the graces of one of Taymore's sisters, offered the widow to supply the place of that son Clementina had robbed her of. Another wedding, (exclaims the wearied sentimentalist,) not one of these pretty fellows to shoot themselves for love; but one beauty to pine away, and all the rest *marry*. Betty, tell Mr. Vampyre never to send me Honoria Scot's Novels; that shipwreck at the beginning has led me into the folly of reading two volumes of matters one meets enough of, in *one's own melancholy life*.

Pardon sweet lady, Alfred and Lillian are so happy a pair I cannot wish them disunited. Angus and Euphrasia are in the like situation; nor, I believe, would Morven prefer suicide to Maud. But why not Irvin constant? enquires the gentle reader. To this I reply, "his failing leaned to virtue's side," as much as could reasonably be expected. As to the fashionables I have introduced, I make no apology; they exist in society, and doubtless the reader recognizes them. Another question; why do your Novels follow each other so quickly. Why not bestow more time, and render more perfect your compositions? Ay, there's the rub; but rest contented, gentle reader, the secret you would now draw forth, must be purchased by similar misfortune. The poverty of rank is, of all others, the most dreadful; those who cannot retire from observation, must purchase respect from the

multitude, and seem what they are not. No more of this, I would wish you reader to smile at my sallies ; and this you would not, did you know their origin—an aching heart. Let me turn from this egotism to other authoresses, who press forward to the press, each more eager than another to win your favour, and explain what manner of women they are, by the introduction of a few facts. Not many years from the period in which we write and read, lived a young man, who sat in a kind of hive, surrounded by hurried productions. From him, youth imbibed all that sentiment could conceive, or prostitution write. Nearly twenty girls were employed by him in the task of writing ; and these could well describe the varieties of love, and a thousand other matters, which ladies of past times never saw in print, (so enlightened are we of the

present day). These damsels taking the hint from an usage of the sisterhood, to whom they mostly belonged, adopted most imposing names. Alas, reader, Seraphina or Clementina, were many syllables short of their wishes of embellishment to their title pages ; not but that their leader, desirous of being apart in designation from the amatory multitude, chose one much the reverse. *Kit*, doubtless alluding to the long bow she drew, a finer work of imagination than her's never appeared before the town ; what dinners were served up ; what epicures indulged in ; and, like the good *Barmicede*, the fancy was carried on till the authoress became tipsy, and told such stories. I hope *Kit* "came honestly by them." This writer presents nothing dangerous ; it is not disgusting indecency that sullies the mirror of the mind, the image cannot dwell on

it, but, more of guarded scenes, more refined nonsense ; this bevy of damsels owing to the failure of their employoyer are now hurrying over the town, with intent of more widely disseminating their poisons, but the constitution of the mind ought not thus to be trifled with, however cheaply the drugs may be purchased ; I believe the sensitive girls who consume invaluable hours over the pages of romance, would start with horror, were they to know the fact, that in the upper boxes of the theatres, are nightly seen the priestesses of Minerva, the delineations of delicate passion, the instrucors of sensibility. How do you contrive Betsy to live in this here Lunnon, (said a girl from the country, to a recognized tawdry friend)? Why, (replied the lady), half my time be spent in teasing prentice boys, and t'other in writing

novels for Mr. Vampyre. How noble such source of intellectual improvement? We must not quit the subject of authoresses without paying deference to the learning of Kit, who introduces Latin as naturally as pigs do 'squake;' not but her quotations are unfortunate since the mournful words in which she begins an elegiac composition written after a description of a party, at which thoughts and words were free, has the effect of a hiccup. French and Italian are too familiar with this writer, since she takes unwarrantable liberties with them. Pardon reader, and recollect I am doing the same with you, but if the degression in which I have indulged, has effaced from memory, the faults with which my own compositions abound, my impertinence will not be without its use; and I may indulge the hope, my literary adventures

will meet with favour, and that the Castle of Strathmay will introduce to notice the Authoress.

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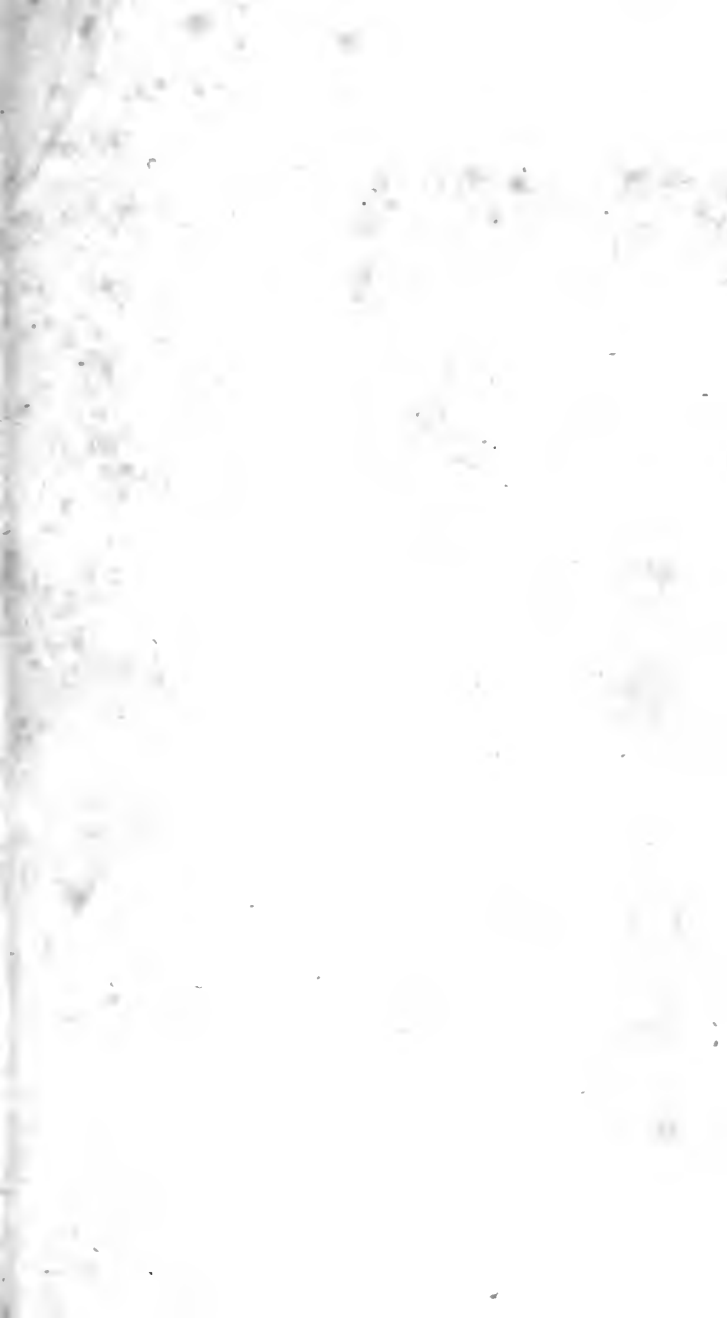
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